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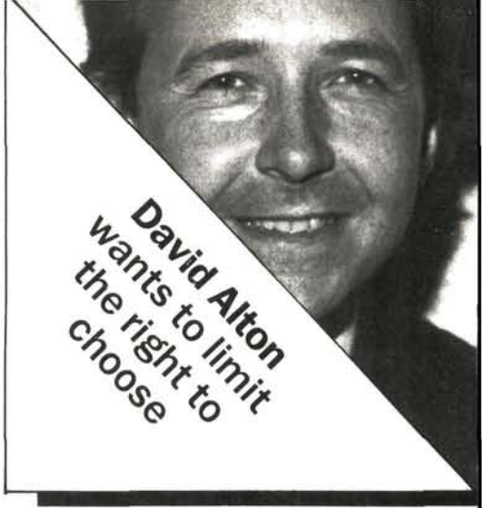
STATESMAN

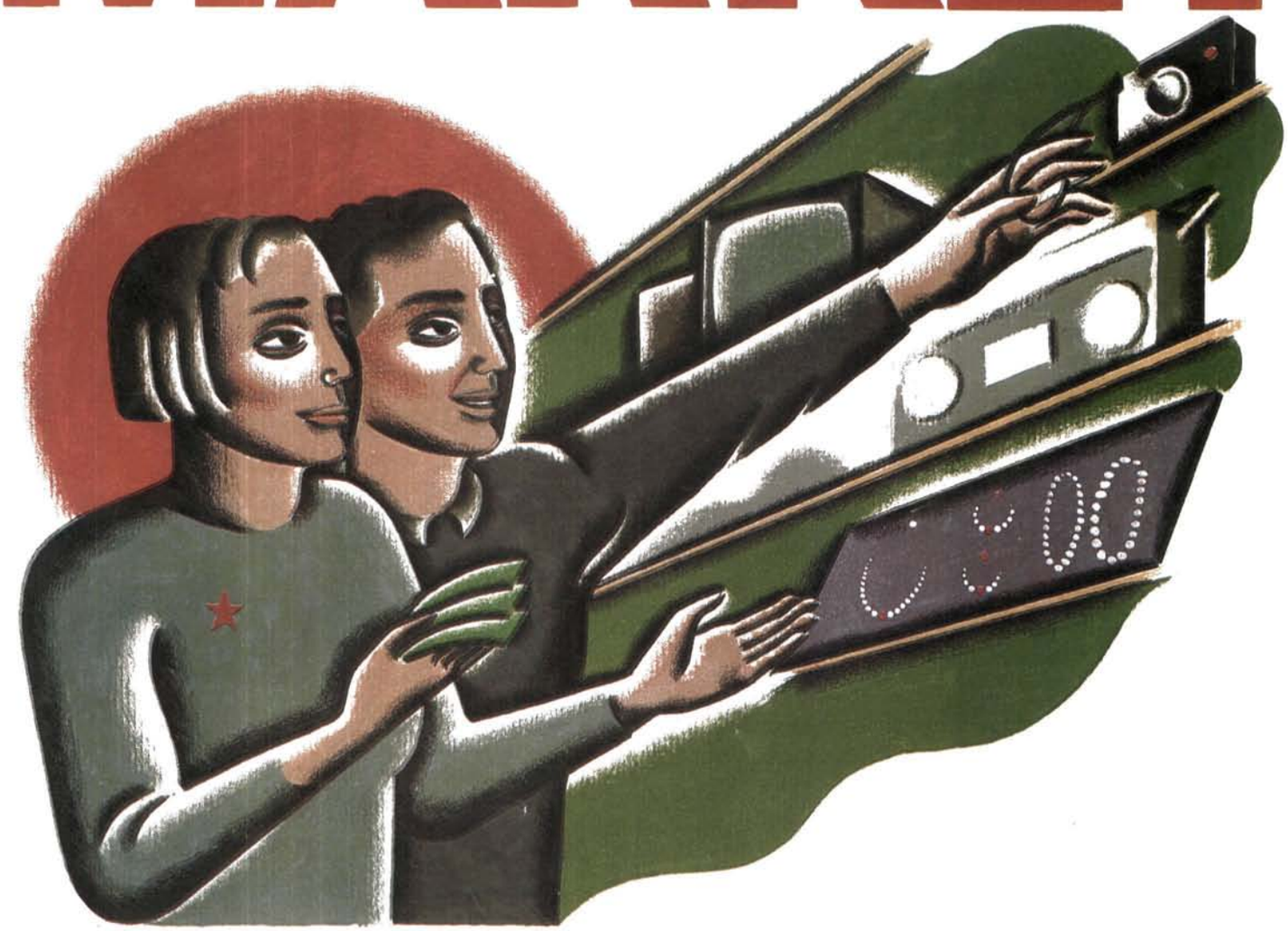
- TV's higher morals
- Liberating Tiger Bay
- The Borking of the President
- Nigeria Diary
- Edmund White interviews Juan Goytisolo



David Alton wants to limit the right to choose

70 years on from Red October

SOCIALISM COMES TO MARKET



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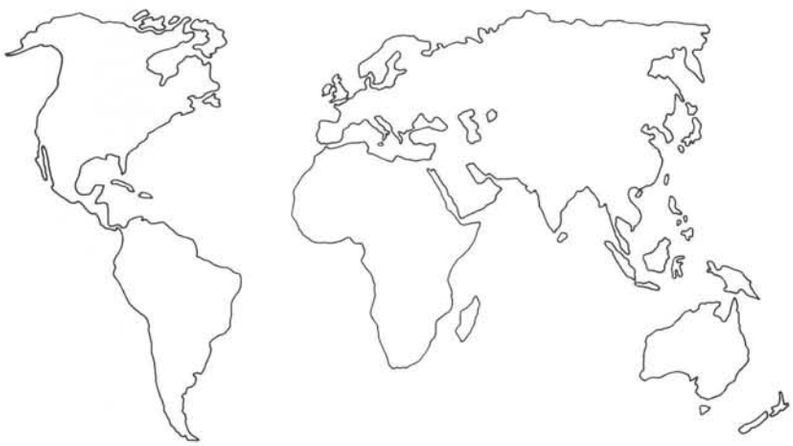
Those countries ahead of Britain in pharmaceutical research are shaded red.



It's no accident that all three of the world's best-selling medicines were developed in the UK.

After all, one pound in every ten spent world-wide on pharmaceutical research is spent in the United Kingdom by British-based companies.

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 114 No 2951 16 October 1987

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NEXT WEEK

What are we doing to our world — the ecology in crisis; the French approach to crime; Jack Straw on markets; Robert Chesshyre on Fleet Street

Anti-children politics

'THERE ARE proposals to reform and reorganise the education service in England. In addition the government is proposing to allow inner London boroughs to assume for the first time responsibilities for providing education in their areas . . . I am concerned that, notwithstanding the best efforts of those involved, the combination of these two aspects of reorganisation is likely to result in a break-down in the administration of the [education] service in the capital.'

That was William Stubbs, education officer of the Inner London Education Authority; rare for a senior bureaucrat, he made his qualms public in a letter to the *Guardian* on Monday. But — is Stubbs not defending a service which, on most tests, delivers sub-average education to the capital's children? Where the amount paid to educate each child is as much as double that of other authorities, while the results can be as low as half as good?

The answer to that is no, he is not; nor, now, are his political masters. It is important to appreciate this, for the Thatcher/Baker plans for education depend vitally, for their rhetorical appeal, on the real and alleged failures and excesses of ILEA.

In a little-noticed speech to the Socialist Education Association in Brighton on 30 September, Neil Fletcher, the new leader of ILEA, showed that the tag of 'extreme left' hung about his neck when he snatched the leadership from Frances Morrell in May of this year had no meaning; or if it had, it has none now. Fletcher showed real quality in the speech, and if he can do the vastly more important and difficult job of delivering on it, he will be worthy of his position.

The speech asked a series of questions, but questions which had a point to them so sharp that he is already accused by the teachers' lobby of 'stooging' for the Education Secretary. The central question was this one: 'How is it that one of the cornerstones of the postwar consensus — a state education system locally administered — now appears so vulnerable? . . . Everyone in this room has to ask themselves how we as socialists are to blame.'

Fletcher spoke in the name of working people — those people for whom Mrs Thatcher last week promised to implement an irreversible shift in the balance of power. Their fears, he told his (middle-class) socialist educators' audience, are that 'comprehensive education does not stretch and challenge children enough or provide them with the essential skills needed for survival in the modern world. Is it part of our political creed to tell them they are wrong?'

Other questions: is the system flexible enough to cope with the needs of children from different ethnic backgrounds? Why, even in those schools with non-sexist guidelines, do fewer girls than boys take science and technology subjects? Should ILEA introduce 'magnet' schools specialising in different subjects? Why do working-class children do worse than their middle-class peers? How are parents to be more involved in education? And the central question of all 'How do we raise teaching standards?'

Well, Baker has asked some of the same questions, recognised some of the same malaise. But his answers look like deepening the crisis.

The first schools to consider opting out are now making themselves known. They are *not* those which Baker says he expects to do so — inner-city comprehensives oppressed by the left. They are schools which feel themselves impelled to compete in the market.

John Lilly, the headmaster of Kingdown Comprehensive in Warminster, Wiltshire, was reported (in the *Observer*) as saying he was 'ideologically and professionally opposed to opting out' but that the threat of an opted out grammar school near to him forced him to recommend the move to pre-empt the 'creaming off' of his brighter pupils. 'I am paid to get the best education for children here, regardless of what happens to other schools. Kingdown is academically successful and I could easily attract pupils from outside the catchment area if I could bus them here as the private school up the road does.'

Lilly is right: the principles of the market, which are the principles of the education reforms, will force him and other headteachers — regardless of their better judgments for education as a whole — to act in that way. Kingdown may well compete with private and opted-out grammar schools. Others will sink, and their pupils with them.

Neil Fletcher, and people like him, should have asked the hard questions years ago; they have been waiting to be asked for at least a decade, since the James Callaghan 'great debate' on education ran into the sand. The left did not face up to failures, and to the manifest alarm of the mass of parents.

But it is doing so now, And it must counterpose its own vision of efficiency in service, and of egalitarian provision, against the new principles now being promulgated. For where the left has erred in omission, the government is intent on imposing a monstrous degree of inequality on children; intent on underpinning the position of the elite and the rich; intent on consigning the struggling to the sink. It is the most important issue in domestic politics. **John Lloyd**

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DIARY

Niger

Despite the artificial nature of the colonial boundary which divides Niger from Nigeria — the frontier runs straight through Hausa lands — the countries on either side have developed very differently. Niger has hardly developed at all. Only two trunk roads are tarred and there are virtually no cars. The French dig uranium out of the ground but Nigeriens have little else to export. The Sahara covers the northern half of Niger; further south, nomadic herdsmen eke out a living in the dried-up Sahel, by driving their camels and goats towards ephemeral patches of green grass. Only in the far south can crops such as millet and sorghum be grown. Niger remains refreshingly free from capitalist motivation: taxi-drivers refuse to drive you beyond the hometown they have never left, whatever price you offer.

○

After two weeks in Niger, Nigeria seems like a developed country. The finely-decorated mud houses of Niger give way to modern, shoddily-built breeze-block dwellings. The roads are tarred, petrol is cheap and in Kano — whose population roughly matches Niger's six million — the traffic jams are worse than in London. There is bustle, hustle and hassle.

The north of Nigeria is Muslim, the south mainly Christian. Islamic revivalism is spreading fast in the north, and feeding communal tension. In Kano's old town, where children splash around in the open drains that run down the narrow lanes, there is a Koranic school on every corner, teachers with whips stand over classes ranging from toddlers to adolescents. The children learn to recite the Koran by rote. And they learn Arabic calligraphy so that they can write the Koran. These boys and girls appear to learn nothing else. It matters that these children do not learn English, which is the language of government, business and the professions. They have never taken to Western education as readily as the southern Yorubas and Ibos, and have therefore stayed poorer. Their one power-base has been the army.

Conflict is brewing between Islamic fundamentalists and the Muslim generals who rule the secular state. Many fervent young Muslims want Islamic law and an Islamic state. But the generals know that Christians are scared by proselytising Muslims. Saudis, Iranians and Libyans are providing money for converts to Islam. Many churches have been burnt. Religious leaders of both communities make ignorant and inflammatory public statements about the demerits of the other religion. In Kano in 1980, the army had to crush the revolt of an Islamic sect which preached the purification of Nigeria's corrupt society. About 4,000 people died, including the sect's founder, Maitatsine. Every year since, unreported in the West, religious riots have flared up in the cities of northern Nigeria.

○

It is hardly surprising that Islamic feeling is growing; it offers a clear alternative to the corruption and materialism which make Nigerian society seem like a poorer version of America. In the bar of Kano's Central Hotel, a main meeting point for the fat Hausa businessmen who wear beautifully embroidered flowing robes, there are more prostitutes than clients.

We travel to Katsina, which like its neighbour Kano is an ancient Hausa city-state. The *jihad* of Uthman dan Fodio in the early 19th-century converted the Hausa cities to Islam, and created the Sokoto Caliphate, from which the Emirs in each city derive political and religious authority. Nowadays these traditional rulers have to share political power with secular local government.

The Emir of Katsina lives in a decaying medieval mud palace. My travelling companion being a student of architecture, we ask permission to photograph the interior. Palace officials divert us to various tiers of local government bureaucracy, which we fail to penetrate, so we return to our hotel. While we eat a meal of stewed goat bones, the Nigeria Security Organisation — their equivalent of MI5 — arrives. They arrest us and take us to their office. Our questions about the palace have aroused suspicion. Recent religious riots have made them ultra-sensitive to strangers. I claim to be a tourist, but that is not a word they understand, as there are none in Katsina. My companion tells them he is studying Islamic architecture. But since he is a Christian from southern Nigeria, they do not believe him. After four hours, they begin to realise that we are not spies. Then the power goes and in the dark our interrogator cannot continue to take notes. He apologises for the fact that in his country the power and the water come on only for a few hours a day, and lets us go.

The next day we get permission to photograph the Emir's palace. Dozens of hangers-on and extended family squat in nooks and crannies around the edge of the shambling structure. Inside, the walls are covered with silver polo trophies, and fading photos of the Emir and his family arm-in-arm with colonialists from the same polo team. We meet the elderly Emir, who tells us that his father was polo champion of Nigeria. He shows us a picture of himself with the Royal Family at the Windsor races in 1958.

The Emirs are certainly a conservative force in Nigerian society. In theory they have little political power, but locals tell us that because Katsinans respect and obey their Emir, local government can do little without his support. The Emir of neighbouring Kaduna showed in 1981 that the power of traditional rulers should not be underestimated: when a Marxist state governor started to campaign against the feudal nature of the Emirate, mobs appeared and burnt down government buildings.

○

Niger's society is less turbulent, perhaps because of its poverty and its uniform Moslem faith. But in the ancient Tuareg town of Agadez, dominated by a hundred-foot, 17th-century mud minaret, we encounter smouldering discontent — fanned by Colonel Gadafy. The Tuaregs are mostly nomadic, and closely related to Gadafy's berber people. Since the deadly drought of the early 1980s, from which the Tuareg herds have not yet recovered, many Tuaregs have quit the bush for camps around the edge of Saharan towns like Agadez. We visit a camp where many Tuaregs are unemployed — they blame their lack of education and discrimination by other tribes. One Tuareg entrepreneur recently tried to build a tourist hotel in Agadez, but the government vetoed it. Most Tuaregs have little love for the austere military regime of President Seyni Kountché. Five years ago, a band of Tuaregs tried and failed to topple the government, with the help of guns and money from Libya. Links with Libya remain strong.

We enter an oblong tent which is made of a wooden frame and a skin of woven palmfrond mats. It houses four Tuaregs: a hotel waiter, his sister and her husband and an unemployed cousin. They possess no more than can be carried on a camel's back: a portable bed, some mattresses and blankets, a box of clothes and a few pots and pans. The sister is not allowed to meet us and stays in the background while the men talk politics and religion with the two foreign visitors. They advise us to read Colonel Gadafy's works. They support him because he stands up to America and punishes capitalists. The unemployed cousin has just come back from Libya, where he searched for building work. He enthuses about the welfare programmes and subsidised shops for the poor. But why has he returned? He pauses. 'Enfin,' he says, 'Il n'y a pas de liberté en Libye.' I ask if he is really concerned about freedom of speech. He explains his meaning: once, when he had whistled at a girl in the street, police had arrested him. That does not happen in Niger or Nigeria — yet.

Charles Grant

The author is a writer on The Economist.

ROGER WODDIS

Naming of Private Parts

(Acknowledgments to Henry Reed)

'Far from being engaged in good and prudent housekeeping, the government are selling off our last strategic oil asset at a total cost to the public of £1.000 million.' — Gordon Brown, Shadow chief secretary to the Treasury

Today we have selling of BP. Yesterday
We had TSB, British Gas and Telecom. And
tomorrow
We shall have electricity. But today,
Today we have selling of oil. Shares accumulate
Like flies on the eyes of Sudanese babies,
And today we have selling of oil.

This is the catch. The purpose of this
Is to offer a discount at a loss
To the Treasury, as you see: We call this
A sweetener. And rapidly doing their sums
The privateers are jostling and scrambling for
shares:
They call it spreading the wealth.

They call it spreading the wealth. Today
It is oil. Tomorrow they will be flogging
Prisons and churches and the Albert Memorial,
And the unbottled air and the open sea,
Which are at present in the public sector,
For today we have selling of oil.

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Back-street fighting woman

THE LOOMING battle over the next Chairman of the Conservative Party is much more fundamental than a sharp-elbowed effort to prevent Lord Young from doing two incompatible jobs. At bottom it is a fight over how rapidly Mrs Thatcher is allowed to complete her transformation of the Conservative Party into a very un-Conservative party of the radical right.

Because of superficialities of style, Mrs Thatcher has been underestimated as a crusading representative of *back-street* Tories, determined to replace the 'soft' and 'wet' consensus-seeking *big-house* Tories. Under Lord Young, completely Mrs Thatcher's instrument with no independent political base of his own, Conservative Central Office is expected to become even more the engine of this change than under Norman Tebbit. Tebbit shares Mrs Thatcher's aims and targets, as seen by his proclamation last week of new organisational weapons for assaulting Labour's strongholds in the cities. But he lost Mrs Thatcher's confidence in his obedience in carrying out her intentions.

Her intentions are radical in the sense that they intend to effect a basic change in Britain's class structure. She was not joking when she stole Labour's 1974 promise to bring about an 'irreversible shift . . . of power . . . in favour of working people and their families'. She wants to make it easier for the ambitious sons and daughters of pawnbrokers' clerks (Tebbit), railway platers (Parkinson), bench-hands (Moore), watchmakers (Clarke), as well as grocery clerks (Thatcher) to climb educational and other ladders to challenge the effete traditional governing class and other 'vested interests' (one of her hate-phrases).

Her third victory has given her the supreme 'What's to stop us?' confidence that she can facilitate the liberation of her fellow back-streeters. The hold on them of Labour-led councils, already weakened by council-house purchases and ratecapping, will be further weakened by stripping councils of their housing. The hold of the ILEA and other sections of the anti-Tory educational establishment is to be prised open by opting out and dismantling. The cheap distribution of sure-fire shares is intended to develop the 'everyone a capitalist' mentality.

The ideology of the radical right is making unexpected gains within the party — which should now be called the 'Unconservative Party'. It was striking last week at Blackpool that delegates were much younger and more ideological than at previous conferences. It started with its usual long prayer meeting. But on its last day a Thatcherite's demand for an end to Sunday trading limitations, forcing vicars to compete with shops for their audience, brought a standing ovation.

The unexpected challenges to Mrs Thatcher from her normally super-loyal Lords Leader, Viscount Whitelaw — over Lord Young and her new progamme — can only be understood as a demand that she slow her pace. Lord Whitelaw is the senior representative in the Cabinet of the surviving traditional governing class. Initially her crusade was tolerated by them as that of a licensed head-banger, willing to take on the unions, including the miners, with whom the consensus-seekers feared to tangle. Now they fear her radical new measures are not only too risky but are building up to a direct challenge to the old governing class.

Mrs Thatcher's reply to these 'consolidators' was to sack John Biffen in June and ridicule the idea in her final speech last Friday: 'Would "consolidate" be the word that we stitch on our banners? Whose blood would run faster at the prospect of five years of consolidation? . . . our purpose . . . is to extend opportunity — and choice — to those who so far have been denied them.'

Andrew Roth

Socialists for Europe

RETHINKING socialism chapter 101. A large group of left-wing Euro-luminaries are to gather on the weekend of 7/8 November at the North London Polytechnic to confer on 'The Alternative to Trade Wars'. It's code for coming to terms with the European Community.

And not just coming to terms. Conference organiser Frances Morrell now sees the Community as *the* focus for socialists concerned to alleviate unemployment and revive industries. 'The European level is the only one on which we can now make any impact — assuming that, by the next general election, we will have made significant progress towards the integration of the EEC. The British economy as a separate entity has all but ceased to exist. Socialists must take on the market at a European level. We must link up with other democratic socialists and develop a coherent political project across Europe.'

Others to speak include Bryan Gould (of course); Peter Glotz, Gerhard Stahl and (possibly) Oskar Lafontaine of the West German SPD; Larry Whitty, Labour's general secretary; Tom Sawyer of NUPE; Ade Becchi-Collide of the Italian Socialist Party and Luciana Castellina of the Italian Communist Party; John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB general union; Tony Blair MP; Pascal Petit and Isabel Bouillot of the French Socialists; and many more. Details from the North London Polytechnic director's office. ●

Make way for Moore

FOR THE FIRST time, a sitting member of a health authority nominated by the TUC has been 'sacked'. Lucy deGroot of the City and Hackney Health Authority in London was removed from office on 1 October, despite protests from the trade unions and local organisations that she has made a dedicated contribution to the work of the authority over the last four years.

Even a majority of her fellow members of the authority resolved to protest to the Regional Health Authority (North East Thames), which makes the appointment. The Regional Health Authority refuses to discuss the reasons for the sacking, but to rub salt in the wound has appointed instead the wife of the Conservatives' defeated general election candidate in Hackney South. ▷

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Britain is isolated on the issues of sanctions. Thatcher can and must be forced to change direction. That's why the Anti-Apartheid Movement is calling for massive support for the SANCTIONS NOW Demonstration. Join us!
Guest Speaker Sam Nujoma President SWAPO
Guest Speaker Sam Nujoma President SWAPO

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Since the creation of the National Health Service, the TUC has nominated trade unionists to seats on health authorities, although in recent years several TUC nominees have not been appointed. But this is the first time a sitting TUC nominee has not been re-appointed.

Health and Social Services Secretary John Moore gave notice at the Tory conference last week that he intended to pursue (rather ill-defined) radical reforms in the NHS. Whatever these turn out to be, he needs to get his way over the next four years and is clearing away the last vestiges of opposition to central government diktat in the health service.

As you might imagine, the opportunities for redress are few — in fact they are limited to the chance to apply for judicial review, which is presently being considered by the TUC. This should put paid to any lingering doubts as to the urgent need to make health authorities directly accountable and responsive to local needs.

Ian Keys

The author is a GMB union officer.

If the caption fits

No 39

A true literary event to write speech, thinks bubbles or captions for — Cynthia Payne (authoress) meets Derek Jameson (ex-editor of the *Daily Express* and television presenter) at the Savoy, where Penguin threw a bash to publicise her new book *Entertaining at Home*. Winner will be presented with a ten-pound book token. Entries to be in by 26 October.

Winner: No 37

The Jeffrey Archer Standard Lamp — Ideal for Light Reading. *(Judy Lustigman, Edgware.)*

The crime business

THE OFFICIAL policy of the Department of Trade and Industry is to discourage British companies from making any further investment in South Africa, but at the same time the department is handing out briefing papers to businesses which advise them to . . . invest in South Africa.

On 30 October 1986 Paul Channon, then the Trade and Industry Secretary, told the Commons that the government was implementing the European Community directive on investment in South Africa and he said: 'The government is taking action to dissuade UK firms from making new direct investment and to ask all the companies concerned to comply fully with this measure.'

But a briefing paper from the department on the huge new oil exploitation in Mossel Bay in South Africa, worth about £1,200 million, tells British business that it is 'well-placed to benefit from this development'.

Helpfully it says that 'companies already investigating this market or who initiate enquiries in the future, should be prepared to discuss possible joint venture or manufacture-under-licence arrangements with local companies. The alternative would be to consider establishing own subsidiaries'. Both joint ventures and subsidiaries involve new investment.

The briefing was first issued in August 1986, a month before the EC directive, but it is still being handed out to British businesspeople by the department, as are other briefing papers to help businesses keen to expand trade with South Africa.

One of these concerns the safety and security equipment industry which, as it points out, is big business in South Africa and expanding fast for a number of reasons: 'These factors are generally listed as follows:

- an increase in crime, including terrorism;
- high claims which have forced insurance companies to insist on enhanced security measures before insuring;
- a general lack of sufficient police manpower, much of which is diverted to combating unrest in black townships.

There are some indications that increased expenditure and vigilance by police and civil authorities are starting to have a positive effect, but the demand for sophisticated security-related items seems likely to remain.'

Labour MP Bob Hughes, who chairs Anti-Apartheid, has written to the present Trade and Industry Secretary Lord Young describing the briefing papers as 'grossly offensive' and asking for them to be withdrawn. The report on safety and security is tantamount to government endorsement of the activities of the police under the state of emergency, he says. And it is designed to promote sales which are in breach of the EC restrictions on the 'cessation of exports of sensitive equipment destined for the police and armed forces of South Africa'.

Martin Linton

Tippling the scales

THE TWENTIETH anniversary of the breathaliser this month is unlikely to be celebrated in the pubs and clubs up and down the country. But is it now time to take the law against drink driving one stage further and permit the police to take random breath tests from motorists?

Barbara Castle's Road Safety Act 1986 did away with doctors giving evidence and motorists walking up and down white lines as a test of fitness to drive. It introduced the roadside breath test, the Alcotest R80, which if positive led to a requirement to give a sample of blood or urine. If the driver was over the 'prescribed limit' for alcohol in the body a prosecution for driving with excess alcohol followed.

But the 1967 Act and the later amending statutes have not permitted random tests. The police have to suspect the driver of alcohol in his body (usually by smelling it on his breath) or of having committed a moving traffic offence or there has to have been an accident. The police cannot just stop cars leaving the pubs at closing time. Despite a recommendation for change by the Elennerhassett Committee in 1976 this is still the law and the Home office has no plans to introduce random testing.

The civil libertarian approach to date has been to argue that random tests would breach the established principle that the police cannot act without reasonable suspicion that an offence has been committed. A change in the law would be a dangerous precedent, opening the way, for example, to an extension of the law to stop and search people on the street. Besides, random breath testing is inconvenient and intrusive for the innocent. It may also be open to abuse. The police may be or may be thought to be selective against identifiable groups, such as young people or black people, in a way which might damage relations with the public.

On the other hand, there is a growing body of evidence in countries where random testing is legal — Scandinavia, New Zealand, parts of Australia and 30 states in the USA — to suggest that it has a very real deterrent effect upon drinkers. In New South Wales, Australia, for example, the introduction of random breath testing reduced by 37 per cent the number of drivers killed who had a blood alcohol level above the limit. It also

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produced a 21 per cent reduction in all road accident fatalities and a saving of money in health and social security payments estimated to be in the region of five million Australian dollars.

The climate of opinion — public and judicial — has changed since 1967. Juries were at first reluctant to convict where there was any semblance of a defence, no doubt on the 'There, but for the grace of god, go I' principle. Judges disliked losing their discretion on sentence with the mandatory disqualification which followed conviction. They found untold loopholes and technicalities to avoid convictions.

No longer. The right to trial by jury has gone. Most of the technical defences have been removed. The procedures are simpler with the Intoximeter and less frequently challenged. The appeal courts have ruled in favour of back-calculation of a blood alcohol level. They have also indirectly sanctioned random testing by refusing to exclude evidence of alcohol in the body following a test where the police realise afterwards that they did not after all have proper grounds for stopping someone.

Public opinion is now inclined to accept the breathaliser as vital to saving lives on the roads. The balance may just have tipped in favour of making out a special case for random breath tests.

Peter Thornton

The author is a barrister and past chairman of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

The real shift

THE INEGALITARIAN social changes engineered by the first two Thatcher administrations are accelerating, according to a batch of recent statistics. The forces of what might be called 'radical inequality' are still widening income differentials and absolute differences in wealth.

The New Earnings Survey, published last week, showed that differentials for full-time employees have widened again over the last year. Ten per cent of employees now earn over £16,463 a year, while the lowest-paid 10 per cent earn less than £5,153 a year — a relative gap wider than any time since the war. If the ratio had stayed the same as in 1979, the bottom 10 per cent would have earned up to £6,143 a year (and there were over 2 million more people in the full-time employed workforce then).

The rate at which earnings differentials are widening shows no sign of slackening — if anything it is increasing — and it continues to be led by the exponential greed of top salaries. The biggest survey of company directors' pay, the Charterhouse annual report, also published last week, shows an average rise this year of 11 per cent (as against 10 per cent last year), with rises over 12 per cent for the average chair or chief executive. (The average employee enjoyed a 7.75 per cent rise.) There are now at least 11 UK company directors with salaries over £1 million, including Christopher Heath, last week revealed as the drawer of a £2.5 million salary as head of merchant bank Baring Bros' Japanese securities arm.

Also last week, new figures from the Halifax building society confirmed the continuing widening of the absolute wealth gap, driven by the North-South divide in house prices. Similar houses now cost more than five times as much in London as in northern towns like Doncaster and Mansfield, Welsh towns like Wrexham, and everywhere in Northern Ireland. While average house prices in the South East rose by around a quarter last year, in Scotland and North England they rose by only 6.6 per cent.

The Halifax sees 'no evidence of an end to the North-South divide in house price inflation in the foreseeable future'. This view was reinforced by a London Business School study last month ('House Prices and Inflation', by Keith Wade), which backed up earlier studies suggesting that the most important factor affecting house prices is real earnings. As long as earnings go on rising, and rising unequally, so will house prices.

So far, under eight years of Mrs Thatcher's government, the wealth gap between the average person in the richest 1 per cent of the population and the average in the poorer half (adjusting for inflation) has increased from £413,000 to £492,000 per head.

So much for Mrs Thatcher's insolent claim at Blackpool to have achieved Labour's 1974 ambition of an 'irreversible shift of power in favour of working people and their families'.

John Rentoul

Rolling Maggie back

THE GROUP which ran the TV87 campaign before the election to promote tactical voting lives on, and will announce its new incarnation early next month.

The core of the group — including members of the Labour, Liberal and Social Democratic parties — will ask the TV87 supporters to assist them in establishing a 'more permanent organisation' which would take as its task the development of a radical reform programme, to be pressed upon all the opposition parties.

It does not aim at supplanting such bodies as the Fabians and the Tawney Society, and would have no political ambitions of its own. Its task, instead, would be 'to build a consensus for a new agenda in Britain . . (to) . . . retake the initiative and roll back the tide of Thatcherite values.'

Ads are soon to appear in the daily press and meetings are to be called. The group's first task is to raise money: any organisation which wants to roll back the tide of Thatcherite values these days has to be independent and entrepreneurial. ●

Capping the homeless

CAMDEN's Labour councillors have just made the embarrassing discovery that the axe they have been sharpening and wielding with fervour could have been left in the woodshed a bit longer.

A survey of the 1,500 hotel bedrooms rented by the council for homeless families revealed that only 960 were occupied. As a result, last Friday Camden sent home the 47 staff in its Homeless Persons Section for two weeks special leave on full pay while the matter is investigated. A small team of senior housing department officials will continue to provide a service to the borough's homeless families but since the Section's King's Cross offices were closed to the public early this summer, it is doubtful whether any of the homeless will notice much difference.

One problem appears to have been that staff block-booked hotels and then did not fill all the rooms. Furthermore, fraud in B&B hotels where rooms are frequently rented out for £300 per week is bound to be be an attraction for unscrupulous hoteliers. However, a less sinister explanation is that since homelessness has now become virtually the only way to obtain council housing in the borough, many families sign up for it and then flee the awful hotel rooms to go back to stay with friends and relatives until their number comes up two or three years later. Already, 35 such families have been knocked off the list. Camden expects to spend £24 million on hotel bills this year, only £4 million of which it recovers from the Department of Health and Social Security and residents. The

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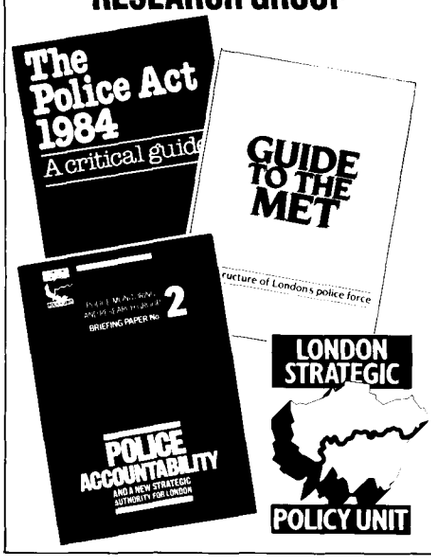

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case of the missing hotel residents is thus likely to have cost the council at least £4 million this year, according to its housing management chair, Gareth Smyth.

The revelation of this waste of resources is all the more painful since in July the council cut £11 million to remain notionally within its £138 million ratecapped budget, freezing all but essential recruitment and laying off temporary staff. Camden is the first council to have seriously begun the retrenchment that three years of ratecapping and the general election defeat have forced on the ratecapped councils. Last week's policy and resources committee was told that due to ratecapping there was a £43.6 million gap between revenue and expenditure which will require 1,500 of the council's 9,000 jobs to go, with a spending cut of 20 per cent. This time they are not crying 'wolf'; but the empty hotel rooms immediately beg the question of how much more waste can be uncovered.

The atmosphere among Camden staff is a mixture of despondency — as one NALGO official put it, 'everyone is spending all their time filling job application forms and going to leaving parties' — and militancy. Whether Camden's workers are prepared to put their militant rhetoric into action will be watched closely by the other dozen Labour councils which face similar financial crises.

The council leadership's immediate reaction to the empty bedroom scandal is seen as another example of its readiness to use strongarm tactics where previously it feared to tread — although sending people home on pay is not exactly a punishment.

The Homeless Persons Section is a particularly militant group of workers, their militancy heightened by the daily task of having to deal with London's growing housing crisis. They have been involved in several occupations and a strike. The decision to send the staff home can be seen as part of the continuing battle within the ruling Labour Group of councillors, between the pragmatists, the majority who voted through the July cuts, and the dogmatist *Briefing* faction whose eight members were forced out of the leadership after they voted against the cuts package. The *Briefing* faction is accused by some of the new leadership of colluding with more militant workers to create a coalition against the Labour Group's policy by fomenting industrial strife.

As part of the stronger line being taken with the unions, the policy and resources committee also voted through a compulsory redeployment clause. Last week, too, the head of a home for the mentally handicapped was suspended following her refusal to admit any new residents in furtherance of a claim over regrading. Her case has been backed by NALGO head office and could result in wider industrial action.

The real disaster of the hotel room mystery is that it gives a couple of Trident submarines' worth of ammunition to the Tories. Camden is already Mrs Thatcher's most quoted borough and now she will use this as a further example of how the left boroughs are unable to manage their financial affairs. Worse, it will enable the government to cast doubts on the extent of the homelessness crisis just as the impending Housing Bill focuses further attention on this very real scandal.

Christian Wolmar

POLITICAL SKETCH

An humble and a contrite heart

Edward Pearce

LITTLE RIFTS within the lute are always interesting and with Bernard Ingham in attendance the Conservatives may look forward to an ever-widening process. Though whether it would be possible to follow Mrs Thatcher's Lincolnshire neighbour Tennyson right through to the point where the rift will 'Slowly silence all' is doubtful.

The candidacy of Lord Young for the Tory Chairmanship unleashed, in the midst of the Blackpool triumph, unnecessary and fascinating conflict. Just as we have accustomed ourselves to the notion of a Cabinet Court, an administration of grateful subordinates, the clones have grown mutinous. Young is not wanted for three distinct reasons. There is the practical, common-sense matter of not wanting the Chairmanship shared with the diffuse and demanding Portuguese Empire of Trade and Industry (Board of Trade to us reactionaries). If Lord Young was an independent, elected fellow often at odds with the Prime Minister, the two-job straddle would still worry people. But then, second reason, Lord Young is not an independent elected fellow, he is Mrs Thatcher's immediate personal favourite, and too much power for him is rightly seen as too much power for her. Owing her all, he would operate to the greater glory of his creator, turning Central Office into Thatcher House.

Finally there is a private feud. Young may be a political confection but it wasn't Margaret Thatcher who invented him, it was Norman Tebbit who was a friend of both the Young brothers, and at one time delighted in their advance. The Thatcher-Tebbit split — lamentably under-reported even in the opposition press, but which *was* faithfully reported in the Rod Tyler/Tim Bell account of the election — has seen Young not merely join the winning side but actually perform some of Tebbit's duties at the Prime Minister's bidding and without consulting him.

MICHAEL FOOT in 1983 used to go around threatening us with 'Thatcher-Tebbit Toryism'. There is no danger of that. A beautiful friendship, cemented in tragedy, has come to a conclusive fullstop. Thatcher has a way of using people up and/or turning them off. John Biffen, once an ally on many points at issue, exemplifies the second category. He listened to her ranting in Cabinet over the need to crush unions at GCHQ, no matter how conciliatory and ready they were to give her an 80:20 compromise. Biffen argued for civilised treatment of such non-enemies and was personally shouted down.

He spent 18 months of disgusted marginality in the Cabinet after that episode. His dismissal from the post he had adorned, after much brutish proclamation of its coming by the graceful Ingham, was only a logical conclusion of her relations with an independent colleague. It had the same roots — peremptory silencing of argument with shrill little shouts — that finally set Michael Heseltine on fire. Whilst Heseltine is combustible and Biffen smoulders, they went as part of the same process; and Tebbit's departure, despite his right-wing affinities, is at least cognate.

Sources close to the government (and we know who that is) have informed the press in the awful knife-in-the-back-way customary in this administration that Tebbit was 'the worst Chairman the Tory party has ever had', palpable nonsense but a perfect reflection of the panic and hysteria which marked Mrs Thatcher's own approach to the election. For the irony is that the Prime Minister and her colleagues have come out of a sensationally successful election garlanded with the sort of mutual recriminations appropriate to having been kicked downstairs by the electorate.

Tebbit, despite his own irascibility, handled the election on the assumption that the Tories were going to win and needed no task forces nor special measures. Young, in his view, assuaged the leader's fits with a series of Potemkin activities on the advertising front to which he and she subsequently attributed the already assured victory. So Lord Young is unloved. A coalition running from Willie Whitelaw to Norman Tebbit wants to stop him. Their favoured runner, John Cope, does, incidentally, represent the most attractive if understated aspect of the Tory party — he is a man as nearly without enemies as a politician can hope to be. Though there is always Bernard.

What surely matters is that this underground spring of resistance to the Lady on the very Feast of St Margaret, at her northern shrine coupled with the *Independent* poll showing Kenneth Baker a clear favourite for the succession, suggests that the political class of the Conservative party has not abolished the future. It looks forward to a leadership style vastly more emollient and significantly more liberal. Mrs Thatcher — who begins to resemble Coke of Holkham, the great encloser, who remarked 'I am the Ogre at the feast. I have eat up all my neighbours' — will make a bitter, suspicious note of the unworthiness of her colleagues.

Conference adores her in that irrational, unhealthy way (an 11-minute standing ovation forsooth!) which makes any independent person flinch. But her Cabinet and her parliamentary party remain slack and sceptical. Indeed they retain the good Tory virtues of tolerance, cynicism and good humour. If one may quote a Communist in this context, Margaret Thatcher may feel like taking Brecht's advice to Walter Ulbricht: 'The People of East Germany having proved unsatisfactory, it may be necessary to dissolve them and form a new one.'

We should look forward to more reshuffles, accelerated promotion for the Thatchertreu young zealot element and a corresponding resentment among the political carriage folk. We may not, in Oscar Wilde's phrase, see 'rioting in Grosvenor Square', but it could be fun. □

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DESMOND S. KING

Don't believe John Moore: the voters still want the welfare state

IN HIS SPEECH to the Conservative Party conference in Blackpool last week, the Social Services Secretary John Moore declared that many welfare state values are 'old myths' and 'sacred cows' which must be 'swept away' for the new optimistic Britain to prosper fully. Such an interpretation fails to appreciate the high regard in which welfare state values — the social rights of citizenship — are held. And it is by reaffirming its commitment to social rights that the Labour Party can recover and thrive into the 1990s, not by imitating the Conservatives' rush to release market forces.

The core institutions of the welfare state were established by the 1945-51 Attlee Labour government and consolidated under the ensuing (three-term) Conservative administrations. The provision of universal health, education and social security programmes became primary government responsibilities. Why did this occur? To most observers — the most powerful explanation lies with the electoral endorsement of the welfare state programme offered by the 1945 Labour party, derived from the wartime Beveridge report. Voters sought the establishment of social rights of citizenship — that is, universal access to health, education and social services — which would complement the civil (the guarantees of individual freedom) and political (participation through universal suffrage) rights created during the preceding 150 years. Such civil, political and social rights are not unique to Britain; they have spurred the growth of the welfare state in most West and Northern European states since the 1940s, more extensively in many cases.

That these social rights are widely supported is demonstrated regularly in opinion polls. For example, the 1985 British Social Attitudes survey recorded consistent support for welfare state spending on education and health, with only a small percentage (6 per cent) of the population favouring tax cuts if these would result in cutbacks in social spending. A universal welfare state counters the workings of the market economy by introducing some stability and economic security into citizens' lives. The postwar consensus accepted the market economy but insisted it be combined with state protection or compensation for its inequitable outcomes. It is this tradition which Neil Kinnock invoked in his rightly famous 'thousand generations' speech. The success of this speech lay, in large part, in the record of the welfare state in increasing the opportunities and standards of living for many British people.

Where the 1979-87 Conservative administrations pushed council house sales and contracting out in the NHS, the Tories' new emphasis is upon the core institutions of the social democratic welfare state. These latter areas — education, health and social services — have suffered, since 1979, from poor funding and staffing but their legitimacy has remained immune from serious challenge. This initiative was foreshadowed by Social Services Secretary John Moore's speech two weeks before the conference, and amplified by the Prime Minister, her Education Secretary and the Conservative Party chairman in Blackpool last week. For these politicians, the 1987 election victory has cleared the ground for the next major stage of liberal Conservatism: universal rights to health, education and income are to be redefined in order to narrow expectations about the role of government in their provision and guarantee.

MRS THATCHER'S conference speech was suffused with this objective: as the postwar consensus transformed the British polity so she seeks now to challenge the social democratic state institutions which were its fruit. The changes up to 1987 constitute no more than the political preparation — in the words of the Prime Minister, a 'staging post' — to the fundamental reconstruction. What was the deliberate creation of the postwar generations of voters and politicians is to be thrown aside in the face of Mrs Thatcher's 'irreversible' revolution.

> ***'It is significant that the Tories plan to restructure education and health within the public sphere'***

In education, the planned introduction of a national curriculum and, in particular, of assessment of young school children, represent a deliberate reversion of previous — and unpopular — policy, and a defiant dismissal of the principle of universality. With 'opting out' the right to education becomes partial: if those schools choosing not to opt out are consistently the weakest, as is probable, inequalities in education will intensify and the prospects of children in inner-city comprehensives may worsen. Such reservations as Kenneth Baker has expressed have been brusquely dismissed by the Prime Minister who will brook neither delay nor compromise. Her chairing of the Cabinet committee for education reform is both political symbol and governing instrument of Mrs Thatcher's purpose.

This is a profoundly important political development and potentially the greatest triumph of the liberal politics promoted by this Conservative administration. It is indicative also of the success of the 1979-87 governments in challenging the values of British political culture: in 1979 such changes lay outside the realm of political possibility. Now education is to be revamped in a new selective, exam-discriminating format — a radical departure from the 1944 Act's 'One Nation' philosophy.

WHY HAS THIS Conservative Party agenda succeeded — not only rhetorically but electorally? The oft-noted failings of the welfare state undoubtedly prompted consumer dissatisfaction and even alienation among some voters and consequently weakened Labour's support. Further, the Labour Party failed to seize the reformist initiative in these spheres in both 1983 and 1987.

However, wholly gloomy analysis is unjustified. First, the opinion polls leading up to the June election showed clear support for the Labour Party's adherence to its traditional values in education and health. Many of the same polls revealed dissatisfaction with these services under the Conservative administration, despite the government's claims about increased expenditures, greater facilities and staff numbers. Acknowledging the existence of problems with the institutions of the welfare state provides no case for their abolition. Rather it can be the basis for their reinvigoration in consultation with their consumers. The Labour Party must apply its creative collectivist tradition to satisfy changing welfare needs and demands.

Second, Labour must challenge the language of analysis used by the Conservatives. The Conservatives talk of reducing universal dependence upon welfare state institutions. But this is to misunderstand social rights: it is through the provision of universal, rather than selective, services that social rights are fully realised. Note that both the education and health reforms restructure within the public sphere but do not remove these services from the state sector — indeed, in education, there is to be an 'independent state sector'. In part these reforms reflect continued public support for welfare services as aspects of social rights and thus the proper preserve of the state. Labour must also make clear the aim of abolishing dependence by ending poverty: social rights are not simply about alleviating poverty but seek to transcend this category by providing the necessary facilities (housing, education, full employment, childcare provision and so forth) for a participatory political culture.

Finally, many people have suffered from the Thatcher revolution; many more will fail to benefit from the current educational and health reforms. It is to these people that Labour must address itself. The social rights of citizenship have provided the most important redress against market forces for ordinary people in the twentieth century. The Thatcher revolution — based on 43 per cent of the voting electorate — is likely to heighten the need for social rights.

Labour must formulate its own improvements in welfare state institutions, solutions which embody and extend, rather than dilute or compromise, the social rights of citizenship. The acceptance of the need for greater consumer choice and some market competition in the state sector must be tempered by an undiminished concern with equality and social justice. □

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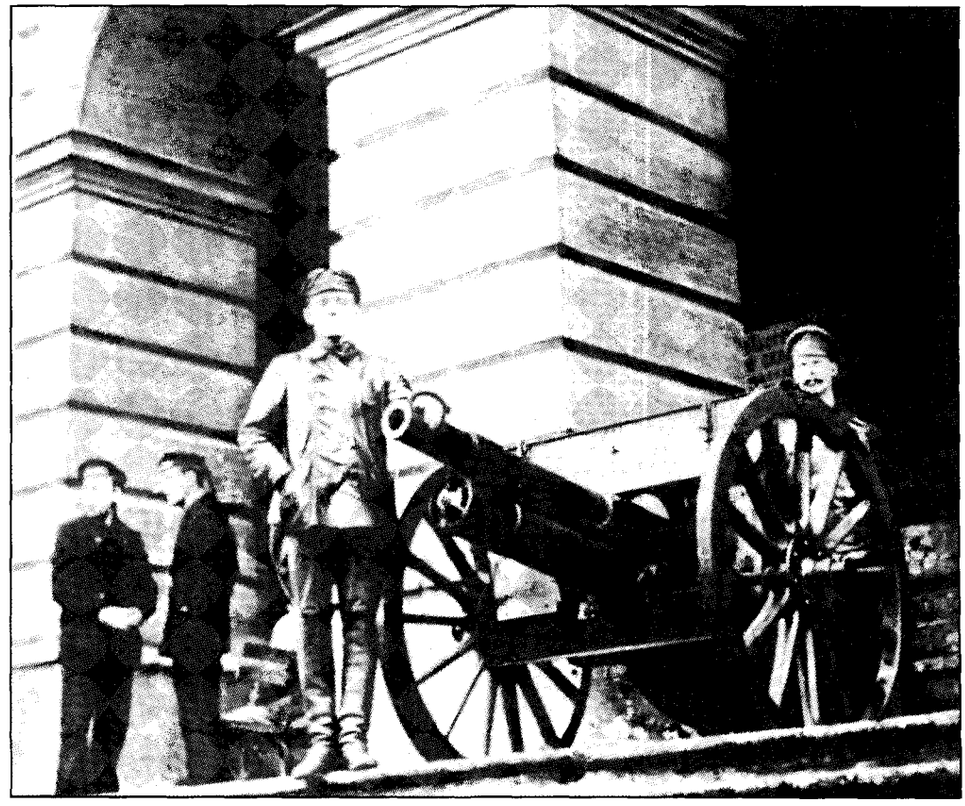
The dying of the masses

The Soviet Union this month celebrates 70 years of socialism — as its new leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, struggles to turn it away from monolithic state socialism, a struggle summarised on p14, and as other communist states adopt more market-orientated policies. In a major essay for the* New Statesman, DAVID SELBOURNE *draws together the lines of development and change in the British left, and in those countries which claim 'actually existing socialism'. Selbourne has emerged, in his polemics against Ruskin College and in his writings (especially* Against Socialist Illusion*), as a slashing critic of the left. We present his essay because the rethinking of socialist politics must include the frankest expression of our inadequacies, or it will fail its purpose



For 70 years, the Russian Revolution has dominated and distorted 'socialism'; now, argues Selbourne, the USSR has repudiated it and the British Labour Party should do the same

POLITICAL TRUTH, like every other kind of truth, knows no party. The historically progressive — now clear in many of Toryism's present policies — is not the monopoly of one school of thought and action either. This is a hard bone for the left above all to swallow, since it has preened itself for a century and more on the special quality of its insight into both the historical process and the workings of the social and economic order.

Most awkward of all, many of the Tory right's reforms are strikingly similar to those now being introduced in the world of 'actually existing socialism', itself in the state of ideological upheaval. Indeed, in the year that the Soviet leadership celebrates the 70th anniversary of the 1917 revolution, the head of the Social Welfare Section of the Soviet Gosplan Economic Institute was justifying the opening of Moscow's first fee-charging hospital on the grounds that it 'extended the right to choose'. 'Payment,' he continued, 'allows the patient to select a doctor, which is not the case in the state sphere.'

Labour's present disorder of purpose — amply confirmed by the TUC and party conferences — has a long pedigree. For its whole 'project', now being called into sharp question by the turn of events, is enmeshed in two connected historic dishonesties or evasions. One is that of a movement with an oppositional stance towards British capitalism and its value-system but without the slightest will — or means — to transform a social order whose legitimacy it fully accepts in practice.

The other dishonesty, or evasion, lies in Labour's refusal to acknowledge to itself, or to admit to the electorate, that its major social programmes ('building up the welfare state', 'ending unemployment' and so on) depend in the last analysis on the health and the progress of British capitalism. For the mainstream of the labour movement has no genuine intention, and never has had any genuine intention, of 'overthrowing' it, or even of radically restructuring the political and economic institutions on which it is founded. It is therefore a politics constantly threatened with collapse upon itself, should its bluff be really called. Today's Toryism has called it.

Thus it is not particularly surprising that, since Labour's third defeat, incoherent calls have been continuously made for Labour variously to 'stick to its principles', to 'appeal to the voters' self-interest, to 'keep close to working people', to 'win over the prosperous to our values', to 'sharpen up our socialism', to espouse a 'new vision of socialist individualism', and so on and so forth. (A few weeks before the general election Bryan Gould even told me, as I interveiwed him for the *Independent*, that he 'agreed with every word' in my book *Against Socialist Illusion*. 'Every word?', I repeated with incredulity. 'Well, almost,' he answered, laughing.) 'Unless we believe in something,' cried a despairing Roy Hattersley in July, in the wrack of defeat, 'we don't exist.' Thatcherism is evidently not so disabled.

The ageing of the British left

Of course, it is not that Thatcherism is so new. Rather, it is the left, especially the insular British left, which has grown old, with its mantras and endlessly falsified expectations. After all, 25 years ago — to go back no further — the right, inside and outside government, was already arguing (Arthur Seldon, for example, in *New Society*, 14 February, 1963) that 'future welfare policy would be concerned not with deciding whether to transfer much of welfare as we have known it from state provision to private choice in markets, but how'. As it happens, the Hungarians — who now have more than 35,000 private businesses, a stock exchange and a growing private banking sector — are themselves considering making cuts in welfare provision 'so that in future it is based on need, rather than on universal right', as one of Kadar's economic advisers put it in March.

But all this is itself surface. To unpick the threads of the left's ideological discomfiture and historical errors of judgment, 20 years and more since Labour won a working majority in the House of Commons, is a difficult and tedious business. At one level are the statistics which measure it, the indices of how far the ground has shifted under the feet of Labour. Fifty-seven per cent of *trade unionists* voted Tory or Alliance in the 1987 election; 65 per cent of all dwellings in England are

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now owner-occupied; there are 8 million share-owners, up from 3 million since 1979; 62 per cent of respondents in the recent MORI poll want a return to grammar and secondary modern schools: fewer than half Labour voters, in a poll in late May, disagreed with the proposition that 'economic success depends on private enterprise, not government', and so on.

At another level, what has to be faced is the long intellectual treason of the Marxist left, particularly since the 1960s, in so crudely falsifying and misjudging the history of the British working-class movement, and in rhetorically and romantically overwriting its prospects and aspirations; reconsidered, too, the three fashion-mongering decades of intellectual assault on the left's grasp of empirical truth in the *New Left Review* — that cradle of intellectual falsehood — and the Marxology it sponsored.

How fake and immoderate were its prognoses, how arcane its 'science', how unbalanced and inaccurate its judgments. 'The British Labour Party,' wrote Tom Nairn in *NLR 27*, in September-October 1964, 'is obviously (sic) one of the greatest political forces of the capitalist world. With its six million and more members, it is by far the largest of social democratic parties. The 12 million votes cast in its favour at the last general election were the votes of the majority of the working class — *of a working class undivided on religious or ideological grounds and sociologically the dominant class in an overwhelmingly proletarian nation*' (my italics). With what little understanding of the passage of contemporary events in Britain did this kind of thing leave the left! And what cowardice there is now in the silence, the fudging, and the equivocation of these spent intellectual forces!

The backsliding is now in full spate. But where is the British left's *glasnost*, where are its *mea culpas*? At pages 18, 21 and 26 of his essay in Porter and Teich's *Revolution in History* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), even Eric Hobsbawm — most scrupulous of historians — has placed distancing quotation marks around the words 'socialism', 'classes', 'bourgeois revolution', 'bourgeoisie' and 'bourgeois society'. But will he tell us, preferably in an article in *Marxism Today*, and in detail, what he *means* by the inverted commas?

Yet this too is trivia: the Marxism, or Marxology, of the privileged intelligentsia has always ridden far higher in its own estimation than anyone else's. (Marx himself hated it.) More important is that the retreat, in growing disarray, of the Marxist left represents less a defeat at the hands of the ideologists of the right than a worsting on the very terrain of the 'real world' where it has always claimed pre-eminence.

What is it that makes the present conjunction of events, trends and failures so awkward, awkward enough to deprive Labour of its sense of direction? Two things, in unhappy combination, one international, the other domestic: first, the stealthy (and not so stealthy) piecemeal restoration in large areas of the socialist bloc of certain free-market practices and values; and second, the ending, in slow-motion collapse, of the post-war 'welfare settlement' in Britain.

From welfare to the individual

The terms of the original 'welfare settlement', designed by Beveridge, were as follows. On the premise of near-full employment and a flourishing economy, standardised social rights to public provision were to be given to the British people, in order to reduce personal insecurity, relieve fears and release energies, while enhancing the sense of common citizenship (in its duties as well as its rights) by so doing.

Both from the economic and the social, or moral, points of view, those expectations were not in the main fulfilled. We do not have full employment. We do not have, in large tracts of the nation, a flourishing economy. We have reduced personal insecurity to a large degree, but without unchaining Prometheus. We do not have an enhanced — rather, a diminished — sense of citizenship in its rights and duties.

Instead, truly vast postwar social provision has failed to bring to birth social (let alone socialist) man; 'socially progressive' policy, or what was presumed to be so, evidently could not be translated *pari passu* into social peace, proportionately advancing standards of education, rising levels of social awareness and self-care, or even deep commitment to the principle of public provision itself.

As the settlement founders, we now know something very well, though very few on the left are ready to admit it: that huge resources and energies have for 40 years been spent and misspent, in the name (often) of socialism, on state-promoted and state-funded schemes of public intervention and provision, but in a culture where a higher ideological status continues to attach to the values of private provision and to the rewards of private acquisition. Such values and rewards have as high a status among working people as any, as Mrs Thatcher has three times discovered.

Yet, to Labour, the shibboleths of public property, public provision and 'welfarism' are articles in faith. They stand at the heart of its politics. It has no other. Indeed these shibboleths, whatever may be happening in 'actually existing socialism', are the common denominators of belief across the party's factions. Again, there are no others.

Indeed, so weighed down now is Labour by its own unwieldly ethic that it is quite unable, or too scared, to discriminate between necessary and unnecessary public provision; or between the good, bad and indifferent consequences of such provision. Nor does it seem able to recognise and admit openly that much of welfare spending, far from being socially progressive, is itself a symptom of social decay and disorder, which it merely institutionalises and camouflages. Even less could it admit that 'building up the welfare state' — that is, building up the *maintained society*, within an accepted capitalist order — is not, in any sense which has meaning, a socialist aspiration.

I referred earlier to the dishonesties, or evasions, in Labour's doctrinal position. Here there is another, which mainly takes the form of ideological self-deception: that by means of public spending provision, and by the route of ever larger public spending — while depending on the health of capitalism to deliver the resources for it — it is possible for Labour to pave the way from one type of social order to another.

There is a wealth of sociological evidence of 40 years and more, evidence which hardens each year and each election, to refute this central thesis of democratic socialism. No matter, either. Thus, the doctrine asserts that the British Road to Socialism runs for part of its route through the comprehensive school classroom; even if the two-tiered Czechoslovak secondary education system, for example, is itself divided into 'grammer school' and 'secondary vocational schools', with restricted entry to university and college by examination.

Whatever the virtues and vices of the comprehensive school system — that creature of middle-class wishful thinking — several things are clear enough. First, the traditional criteria for distinguishing between the 'educated' and the 'uneducated' in our culture remain largely intact. They include 'old' matters of literacy, numeracy, and facility in the use of an 'elaborated code' for communicating in words, or displaying, what one knows to others. The comprehensive system has failed in its efforts to break down this distinction, and the criteria which uphold it. Indeed, it has arguably consolidated them. Thus, second, public and parental unease with the comprehensive system appears to be growing. Third, disparity of esteem between the state and private sectors in education also appears to be growing, in favour of the latter.

The fact that 43 years after the Butler Education Act, and despite huge postwar educational provision, one third of all British children still leave school without any qualification (only one-tenth of German children leave without their school-leaving certificate) has prompted no serious reconsideration on the left of the principles, or dogmas, it espouses. Nor has the fact that 70 per cent of British children — 30 per cent in France, 10 per cent in Germany and Japan — leave school at 16, in what has been described as 'a mass exodus unique to Britain among the countries of the developed world'.

Turn back the pages of Labour's intellectual history, reread (with care) the Webbs and Tawney, and you will soon grasp the present scale of Labour's retreat, not merely from self-criticism, but from the very capacity to criticise its own nostrums and commitments. Compare it with Tawney, in 1931, in his book *Equality*: Public provision should be adequate in amount,' he wrote, 'but its use should be discriminating, and the more it increases, the greater the need for discrimination becomes.'

But why the 'need for discrimination'? 'Not,' said Tawney, 'because of individual malpractices' — 'insignificant', he rightly called them — 'but because of the danger of encouraging social malingering.' (Malingering? Tawney?) Worse still, in 1950, Tawney revised *Equality* to add that 'the enforcement of public responsibilities [upon the state]' should be combined with the

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'preservation of personal initiative.' In today's vulgarised terms of debate, Tawney's position — to a 'left' critic — would be 'Thatcherism', and even a 'dry' version of it.

And what of the Webbs in 1948, as the Attlee government's errors of expectation deepened in the years of postwar reconstruction? They expressed *retrospective doubts*, saving intellectual doubts, of the kind now quite beyond the labour movement. 'The fact that sick and unemployed persons,' they wrote in hindsight (of the new National Insurance and National Health Insurance schemes), 'were entitled to money incomes without any corresponding obligation to get well and keep well, or to seek and keep employment, seemed to us likely to encourage malingering.' (Malingering? The Webbs?)

At the simplest level, this kind of candour — or commonplace, broad-brush truthfulness — is a form of freedom, the freedom which always holds out the promise of new thought on old subjects. Conversely, to foreclose British left debate on such matters out of a mistaken sense of *taboo* is not merely 'theoretically' benighted; it is also deservedly damaging in practice.

For nineteenth-century socialist 'mass-man' is now dying, the world over. And, with him, the long effort of the socialist imagination to bury the citizen's autonomy in the anonymities of exploited mass-and-class is dying also, in intellectual convulsions. The very idea *of 'the masses', as a collective hydra-headed victim and instrument of the historical process, is failing as the economies built in their name flounder. (Hanoi has recently announced that more space is to be allowed in its prostrate economy to the private entrepreneur and that legitimacy is to be given to the private sector.)*

Indeed, it is precisely here that embarrassment for Labour must surely increase further. For, rising now from the ashes of discredited socialist practice — 'the command form of managing society,' Gorbachev declared in June, 'has put a brake on our momentum' — is the phoenix, or ghost, of that awkward customer, the 'individual'. There is not, and never has been, a socialist movement which can deal with him; not even the milk-and-water democratic socialist knows how to. 'We've had this inhibition about thinking in terms of self-interest,' said Neil Kinnock in August, putting his crassest foot in it; 'I think that is now changing.'

Maybe. But every new Labour debate and pronouncement suggests, instead, a movement casting around in the dark with increasing desperation for a way forward, as the future scope for its existing politics is further squeezed between the initiatives of the right and the abandonment in the socialist world of old positions.

Escaping from Albania

In China, in mid-1986, Su Shaozhi, head of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought, praised 'universal suffrage' and 'a system of checks and balances'; and in December 1986 and January 1987, demonstrating students in Shanghai and Peking were calling, by the tens of thousands, for 'freedom, equality and democracy', including a free press. Also in January, Fang Lizhi, astrophysicist and former vice-chancellor of the Hefei Institute of Science and Technology, declared that 'men are born with rights' and that Marxism-Leninism was a 'total failure'. In Bulgaria, in February, seven competing commercial banks were established.

In China, in March — as several thousand Hungarians marched through Budapest singing the 'Marseillaise' and calling for 'freedom, democracy and national independence', and Charter 77 called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslavakia — Premier Zhao Ziyang announced that there was 'no market today for leftist policies in China'. By 1990, he said, the role of central planners would have been greatly diminished and a 'new economic structure' would be in place; he called it 'a commodity-economy [i.e. a market economy] based on public ownership'.

In Poland, it was announced in April that shares in private Polish companies would be able to be bought and sold, and that the 'rational rules of the market' would be encouraged. In the Soviet Union in May — the month in which 70 copies of Lenin's *Collective Works* were found at Belgrade's city dump and students at Peking's Central Institute of Banking put up wall posters of the Statue of Liberty — newly legalised private family enterprises came into existence. Also in the Soviet Union, in June — the month in which the vice-secretaries of the Italian Communist and Socialist Parties declared that merger into a 'single democratic party' ('We will find a name for it') was their 'ultimate objective' — Gorbachev announced his economic programme in detail.

'By 1989', he declared, the 'command economy' would be 'replaced' by a 'more market-oriented' economic system, with 'real competitiveness', profit-and-loss enterprise accounting, and pay linked to 'performance', with 'no upper limit'. Voices could also be heard in Moscow in June calling for a fully convertible rouble on world financial markets, and the selling-off by the state of unused and surplus equipment to individuals and co-operatives to 'stimulate private enterprise'. (New rules permitting the future bankruptcy of unprofitable state enterprises were announced in Hungary in September 1986, China in March 1987, Poland in April, the Soviet Union in June, and Yugoslavia in July 1987.)

In July, an official commission of the Hungarian People's Patriotic Front recommended that private ownership be permitted in the media, including the radio and television stations; Moscow prostitutes proposed that their profession be legalised and taxed by the state; and in Bulgaria — where a new law has even made possible the sale by workers of their own bankrupt factories — Todor Zhivkov denounced the 'social deformation' and 'tedium' of Bulgarian life, and called for a 'new political model' based on 'direct democracy'. 'History,' said Gorbachev in June, calling enterprise, incentive, competition, autonomy and decentralisation to the rescue of the Soviet economy, 'has not left us much time to solve our problems.'

The passivities engendered since 1945 by this treadmill politics are first cousin to the apathies and inertias against which Soviet bloc reform is now struggling; the need for 'openness' of mind is not a whit less here than in the Kremlin.

The new model order

The legacy of this failure has been a far-reaching one. It has included that train of economic disasters in 'actually existing socialism' which derived from enforced collectivisation and the suppressions of the market; the invasion of citizen and human rights wherever collectivism has been politically victorious; and — in our own non-socialist culture — that special disinclination on the part of the left to concern itself with the moral responsibility of the individual for his or her own welfare.

The underlying reasons for this disinclination are deep ones. They derive ultimately from the crude belief, reinforced but not invented by Marx, that individuality, individualism, egoism, selfishness, market freedoms, the right to property, the right to exploit others, and even human rights themselves are near-synonyms, forms of bourgeois right and bourgeois interest; which, like other related class phenomena, socialism will one day transcend and vanquish, in a new moral order.

To hold such a crude belief at all is one thing. To hold it when even in the Soviet Union and China its grip is markedly weakening is another. But it is another still to hold it in a non-socialist and anti-collectivist culture, towards which Labour merely feigns an adversarial pose, where questions as to the political rights, the moral responsibilities and the social obligations of the individual citizen have always, one way or another, been an important part of public discourse — and never more so than

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now, when the right and the new centre increasingly command the political agenda.

Here the left is frail indeed; unaware, even, of the extent of its frailty. Yet how, without a serious conception of the nature of individuality, and of the rights and duties of the individual as a citizen — and not merely as a worker — can Labour now determine politically what burdens can and ought to be borne by the individual, and what by the state? ('I think I know how to lick my own fingers,' said Sancho Panza, wiser than any Michael Meacher.)

Will British Labour and its movement, left, right and centre, never be able to grasp that certain matters of personal moral responsibility go to the heart of human purposes themselves? That kinship, in dealing with accident and old age, for example, has a crucial human and therefore political function? That the individual has rights and duties, which the state must not be permitted to undermine, in the nurturing and upbringing of children — including in their sexual education — in the safeguarding of the physical and mental integrity of the staff, in the search for the criteria of truth and virtue, and in the pursuit of self-fulfilment?

It is, of course, more than 40 years — the 40 years of the postwar welfare state — since such questions could be asked of the left without ridicule or incomprehension, and answered by the left without evasion or incoherence. In contrast, in 1948, at the mid-point of the first postwar Labour administration, the welfare state was bluntly described as the 'service state' by Ferdinand Zweig, and now largely forgotten sociologist of labour, in his *Labour, Life and Poverty*; and equally forgotten propositions about the 'service state' are to be read there.

'The citizen who has been granted so many rights by the community,' Zweig wrote, 'has also assumed new duties to the community. The rights cannot be maintained for long unless the accompanying duties are performed.' (Duties?) 'The right to a free education,' Zweig continued, wholly eccentrically by today's reckoning, 'imposes an obligation on parents not to spoil its work by anti-educational habits', and 'the right to free health care' a related obligation to 'maintain one's own health', to 'strive to live healthily', and so on. Or, as the nineteenth-century historian Guizot put it, 'to be freed, men must be informed of their duties'.

Unhappily, the thread of this (moral) debate is not in Labour's hands. Indeed, it is at present entirely beyond Labour's grasp, such is the Albanian nature of its ideological mortgage. Yet Labour's dilemma is that if it is to remain a potential national party of government, it can *no longer* remain as merely the party of the vested interests of the welfare client, the trade-union-turned-protection-racket, and the state corporation (whether in transport or education). It also cannot continue to pretend that this sub-set of particular, and increasingly unpopular, interests in the political market-place possesses a monopoly of political virtue; that it is by definition progressive; and that it is synonymous either with the general interest or even the interest of the majority of working people. And when all else fails, the rhetoric of socialist incantation is not much use either, whether in Peking, Moscow or London.

But even if Labour were to become aware of all this tomorrow, the truth is that the difficult task of rehabilitating those areas of our culture, economy, and society which have been negatively affected, even wrecked, by left errors of judgment — education being only the most obvious — has been surrendered to the mercies of the right and the centre. For it is the left, not the right, which should have been innovating progressively in secondary educational provision and dismantling the comprehensive system, in pursuit of wider educational opportunity. It is the left which should have been championing the break-up (as now in China) of the grey state monoliths of public housing, in favour of new and more diverse structures of ownership, management and tenancy. It is the left — especially in a society where the labour movement has never seriously questioned the legitimacy of the market system — which should have been the party of the small-scale entrepreneur and shareowner, the party of self-help, self-management and self-reliance.

Again, it is the left which should have opened its arms wide to the benefits (and welcomed the upheavals) of scientific and technological innovation, especially in communications and printing. It is the left which, at this stage in the nation's economic decline, should have been the party of flexibility, change and renewal in social, industrial and economic organisation, forswearing its atavistic hankerings for the kind of command economy which the Soviet Union is struggling to abandon. It is the left, not the right, which should have tackled head-on the petrifications, lack of democracy and financial corruptions of the trade union movement. Above all, it is the left, not the right, which should be working, in the name of social progress, for the abandonment of the principle of universal entitlement to public provision regardless of need.

It would be easier to grasp this if it were realised how deep are the roots of such a politics in the early history of the working-class and socialist movement in Britain. For late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century labour and socialist organisations were the very products of aspirations for co-operative self-reliance and 'autonomy'; were voluntarist, libertarian and anti-statist; were, in largest part, anti-collectivist, Paine-ite, iconoclastic, and strong in their commitments to individual and citizen rights, including the right to property. It was not only Cobbett who held that 'every man's labour is his property'; it could have been inscribed as a badge of belief on every early trade union banner.

It was, in essence, a libertarian politics of working-class and community self-reliance, underpinned by a strong moral sense of citizenship, justice and individual entitlement. It is a legacy which the left and Labourism have squandered; much of its surviving impulse has been co-opted and rearticulated by the Toryism which is now in power.

Nevertheless, its voice can still occasionally be heard in today's Labour confusions. 'Democratic socialists,' David Blunkett declared in the *Independent* in July, 'should be appealing to the very instincts which Thatcherite Conservatism has attempted to take to its soul . . . beliefs in self-reliance and self-determination, a desire to have the dignity of looking after yourself and not having the state or local bureaucracy telling you

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what to do, or how to do it.' He even spoke of the need to 'lift people out of dependence on benefits', seemingly alone on the left in seeing what some of the central issues are.

It is time that this voice in the ideological wilderness was joined by others. Socialism, after all, is nothing less, and nothing more, than 'social-ism'; the meaning of what is 'social' and anti-social' in any given period must always be reconsidered and discovered. Moreover, it is only one paradox among many that it is the social and economic policies of the Tory right, not the Labour left — like the related strategies of the revisionist right, not the conservative left, in the Soviet Union and China — which are now both the more radical and the more progressive.

Labour's first obligation, and the first premise of any hope of its own ideological renewal, is to understand this, *and* to acknowledge it. □

David Selbourne is the author of Against Socialist Illusion: A Radical Argument *(Macmillan, 1985), and* Left Behind: Journeys into British Politics *(Jonathan Cape, 1987).*

SOVIET ECONOMY

Under new managers

Washington

SINCE TAKING POWER in March 1985 Gorbachev has moved steadily toward economic change. The radical changes he announced at June's Party Plenum of the Central Committee — the main policy-making forum of the USSR — are to be enacted by the end of 1990 so that the new five-year plan can start with the 'new management'.

First Gorbachev must motivate workers notorious for skiving or turning up drunk on the job. One Soviet economist reckons that almost one-fifth (18 per cent) of Soviet workers play hookey or are on holiday every work day, and even those who turn up waste time, often nipping out for a couple of hours to join shopping queues.

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In June 1985 Gorbachev banned drink sales after 2.00 every afternoon, and closed a number of the Soviet equivalent of off-licences. His drive against drunkenness, stress on discipline and policy of encouragement showed results in the petroleum production sector, says Marshall Goldman of Harvard University Russian Research Center. He told the Congressional Joint Economic Committee last month how Soviet output in petroleum began declining in late 1983 and two years later was down 3 per cent. Then Gorbachev stepped in. He flew to the main production fields in Siberia telling workers he wanted better quality work and less vodka. After his visit, he smartly sacked local party and petroleum industry officials. The drop in production halted and a year later was up by 3 per cent. This year it is wavering, but may just hold.

In the workplace Gorbachev has introduced 'democratisation' with multi-candidate elections for supervisors in factories and plants. This is not so much a move toward Western-style political liberties as a means to create incentive at worker level.

Improving the economy by working on the human level is one aspect of a much wider battle. The second prong of Gorbachev's attack is directed toward the rigid production system and here he faces a tougher challenge and there is the potential for much greater disruption.

Bankruptcies

The first mass 'lay-offs' under his leadership occurred when he merged five agriculture ministries into one super-ministry called Gosagroprom: 3,400 people lost their jobs in the merger. Unlike Western workers, of course, they were not left unemployed but were found alternative work or trained for other jobs, often elsewhere in the bureaucracy or as factory managers. Some also retired early.

Ed Hewitt of the Brookings Institution points out that Gorbachev showed shrewd political instincts in making unpopular bureaucrats rather than workers the first to be sacked — or 'released' as the Soviets term it — in large numbers. Nevertheless, it presages the upheaval that will come as inefficient factories are allowed to go 'bankrupt' and close.

The first bankruptcy in the Soviet Union was announced amid international publicity in March 1986. An unnamed building firm that was among 37 enterprises then taking part in a self-financing experiment was disbanded by the Leningrad Building Association. A report by the government news agency *Tass* said managers failed to change their work style, fell behind schedule, allowed cost overruns and shoddy work: 2,000 workers were transferred to other jobs. This was a show 'bankruptcy' but it is an indicator of change.

One key law in the June package of reforms calls for the 'self-financing' of plants, factories and other enterprises. It strengthens power at the enterprise level and strengthens links between them. The role of central planning is not eliminated, but gradually the share of goods produced to state order will decline so that, for example, a television factory should steadily be freed from rigid production quotas dictated by the ruling ministry. Although the plant may still have to make some goods according to state order, it should also be able to make more televisions if it wishes, and can begin negotiating with other enterprises to get the best prices for materials and parts. It should also be able to begin making other products.

Another law sanctions the setting up of co-operatives and small private enterprises. One group of smart Soviets have launched a dating system in Riga, Latvia, thanks to this law; other co-operatives and private enterprises springing up include restaurants, car and shoe repair services.

Banking and prices reform are part of the package. But there is popular resentment over possible changes in consumer pricing. This exchange, overheard by one Westerner, illustrates the problem. An official said there must be price increases to reflect the real cost of goods. But a young man vigorously disagreed, saying that the cost of production should be cut, not the price increased. He didn't want his grandma to be paying more for bread. Then the official admitted he never talked about price reform when he went to his mother for dinner because he knew it would ruin the meal.

Yet if Gorbachev is to end the consumer goods subsidies that eat up roughly one-sixth of the total government budget, then he must increase housing and food prices. And in 1962 meat and butter price rises provoked riots and led to a number of deaths. Professor Joseph Berliner of Brandeis University sums up the opposition:

> In all societies a person's welfare is more affected by his status as a producer than by his status as a consumer. It is in their role as consumers, however, that all Soviet citizens will benefit if Gorbachev's new economic system is successful. In their role as producers, however, all face the threat of a decline in their status and in their job security. The popular reaction to the loss of jobs or pay is potentially explosive.

To improve workers' living conditions, the General Secretary is also trying to reform welfare services. A recent report in the influential weekly magazine *Literaturnaya Gazeta* said that just over a third (35 per cent) or rural hospitals have no hot water, and just over a quarter (27 per cent) have no sewer systems. Health minister Yevgeny Chazov recently sliced through the rosy facade of government health statements to reveal that 12 out of 33 maternity hospitals in Moscow fail to meet basic sanitation standards. Again, change is in the air: from January 1988 an experiment begins in Leningrad. Patients will be able to choose their own doctors who will receive wages according to the number of people they treat.

While the self-financing law and prices reform are Gorbachev's immediate priorities, his June package also outlined proposals to encourage foreign trade and joint ventures with foreign companies.

Western economists bet differently on Gorbachev's chances of success. Marshall Goldman believes that the reforms will breed such upheaval that Gorbachev 'will be out before Ronald Reagan'. Ed Hewitt dismisses the idea that Gorbachev will go. 'This man did not parachute down from Mars,' he says. 'He was elected by the Central Committee of the Communist Party after running the economy under Chernenko.'

Gillian Sandford

The author is a journalist at US News and World Report.

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ECONOMICS

The liberation of Tiger Bay

Jeremy Seabrook

BUTETOWN, or Tiger Bay as it has been known, is a shrinking community. As Cardiff docks closed, the tenements and terraces were demolished. Traces of how it once was can be seen in the monumental redbrick buildings of the Butetown Docks Company, with its casements, towers and gargoyles; in the few ragged Victorian buildings along the main road. For the rest, the landscape is empty: buddleia and willow herb, bollards on the neglected quayside, some yachts beached by the receding tide on mudflats that shine in the late summer sun. There is little now to recall the crowded cosmopolitan place where the children waited to lead the disembarking sailors to the clubs and whorehouses for a few pence, and where the young men fished in the estuary waters for whiting and mullet to eke out the family diet, and the ghosts of murdered seamen walked by night under the railway arches.

Butetown, largely redeveloped in the '60s, is now being dwarfed by the scale of building by the South Glamorgan Development Board. There is already a new county hall, a private housing estate where the price of the houses went up by a third between phases one and two in response to the demand, and the distributor road is under construction which will link the new marina to the outer city. There is no doubt that this will bring back life to the docks, just as Mrs Thatcher has predicted, although few residents of Butetown have any illusion that they will be beneficiaries. The incoming army of young rich are unlikely to be greeted as liberators. 'They're coming to colonise us,' said one cynical Rasta. 'Their houses have alarms, locks, closed circuit TV. That shows what they think of us. They'll turn us into coolies and bearers, just as their adventuring ancestors did, only this time they'll call us domestic help, waiters and gardeners.'

Not that work isn't needed. It's simply that the constraints of deference and silver-service waiting are not perceived as emancipating people whose labour involved prodigious expenditure of energy and muscle. In a school half a mile from Butetown about 20 people have been called to the Restart programme. They gather to listen with some diffidence to instruction on how to become motivated to find absent jobs. 'Counselling with menaces' was one middle-aged man's verdict on Restart. And this bringing together people at random into a public forum harshly exposes the vulnerabilities of individuals. One man is compelled to admit that he cannot read or write; his last job was in a factory making dolls' prams, and his hands are still scarred with cuts from the sharp edges of the metal. A woman in her early 50s registered as unemployed when her mother, whom she had nursed for 20 years, died; a sad-eyed effaced woman, isolated and exhausted by 20 years of caring, who has been repeatedly told she has no experience. 'What do they think I was doing all those years?' she says bitterly. One man lives apart from his wife who is working, so that he can go on receiving benefit. 'That's what the system drives you to; a government that prates about family values drives families apart.' A man who was self-employed selling car insurance was 'sacked': he was making enough money for his purposes, but not for the insurance company. A young woman says she has learnt to save money by cooking for her brother and sister's family. 'There'll be nine or ten of us at weekends. The more there are, the more cheaply you can cook. It also brings the family closer again.'

Tony, 26, says the unemployed are a new monastic class. 'We learn to do things for ourselves, for each other, without money. Just as the monks led a separate life, so that's the way it is with us. The difference is, we never took a vow of poverty, the government did it for us.'

THERE ARE few lessons in labour that Restart can teach the people of Butetown. The very presence here of people from Somalia, West Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Eastern Europe speaks of a long and violent experience of labour processes that drew them from all over the globe and flung them down in this arbitrary place. And the present period of unemployment may be only a pause: the lineaments of new forms of service that will claim them and their children are already appearing, inscribed in the altered landscape of the docks.

> ***"The unemployed are a new monastic class. "We learn to do things for ourselves, for each other, without money. Just as the monks led a separate life, so it is with us. The difference is, we never took a vow of poverty, the government did it for us"***

The Charles Street Youth Project employs about 20 people on work for the community programme, many of them from Butetown. In the carpentry room, Shirley is making a cot and a high chair; her son of five months sits back in his push-chair watching his mother. Both articles are nearly finished, varnished white wood, a highly skilled piece of work. 'I've never done anything like this before. I couldn't afford to buy them. I feel I'm giving him something that I've created. I'd still rather make things from choice rather than necessity, but I've proved I can do it.' Shirley comes from Edinburgh. She went to London, lived in a squat, lost weight until she went down to 6½ stone. When she became pregnant she came to Cardiff, where life is a little less harsh. Even so, living with boyfriend and baby in one room for £35 a week isn't exactly luxury.

Because Butetown is a long established community of mixed race ('It's more like Brazil than Wales'), it comes as a shock to many people who grow up to discover the depth of racism in the world outside. Cyril Payne, at the Rastafarian Centre in Butetown, says: 'My mother was white and my father black; they were very loving with each other, and that's how I thought things were between black and white in society. I only woke up to the way things are much later. Now I've come to realise that the system cannot be reformed, it is too corrupt. It will have to be replaced.' The fundamentalism of Rasta gives Cyril both comfort and hope, even though violence must precede redemption. At the same time, Cyril is a vegan, and his philosophy has much in common with the Green and ecology movements.

TONY GREW up in Butetown; he hasn't worked for six years. His last job was in a factory that made plastic bowls. He was brought up as white, but then his mother left her husband and took Tony and his brother to live with the man who was introduced to them as their real father. 'It was a shock. We were poor. He never earned much money. He used to sing round the clubs, all the songs of the 1950s. Occasionally he worked on the buildings. I used to go with my Mam to pick up mouldy fruit and rotten potatoes round the market stalls to make a meal. I never realised I had African blood until one day a teacher at school said 'You're not like us'. I was so upset, I jumped on the desk and said 'I suppose you want me to act like an ape. All right, I will.' And I was always trouble at school. I dropped out, just didn't go. I had to educate myself. I read books on astronomy, I read the Greek philosophers, I devoured Zeno and Thucydides.'

Tony is a sensitive and attractive person who looks after his five-year-old daughter while his wife works. 'And that's a full-time job as any woman will tell you.' He has been helping to form an unemployed people's group in Cardiff. He wants the unemployed to unite so that they become a social force to be reckoned with. 'Just because unemployment has gone out of the headlines, it doesn't mean that people have stopped suffering.' One of Tony's brothers is in a psychiatric hospital. 'He smashed up the house. He had the same conflict over his identity that I did. I was just luckier than he was.'

In the sunshine, on a bench facing the levelled ground where the new road is being built, an elderly man from Tallinn in Estonia sits alone. He came to Britain as a young man after the Soviet annexation of his country. He worked for 30 years in Cardiff. He looks at the wasteland, but sees, he says, the cornfields and the blue skies of his homeland. 'I was a country boy. I couldn't go back, even if I wanted to. I've no one there any more. I've no one here either. I've nothing and nobody to lose in the world.'

The people of Butetown are caught up in a continuing story of migration and dislocation. For them, Mrs Thatcher's regeneration of the inner city is the work of a missionary, recycling fantasies of a colonial past: she is demanding that they convert to her faith in free-market forces, she seeks to end their idolatrous faith in socialism, or indeed in any other radical alternatives. The people here, overwhelmingly poor, left-wing and black, must, as Thatcherism's last enemies, acknowledge error and conform. If there is resistance to this proselytising fervour, perhaps this is because their poverty is precisely a consequence of the workings of those free-market forces which they are now bidden to recognise as their best hope. □

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UNITED STATES

Borking for America

ELGY GILLESPIE ***on the blooding of a would-be moderate***

Washington

THE US SENATE hearings for Reagan's Supreme Court nominee Judge Robert Bork have proved so passionate that they have given rise to a new verb: 'To Bork', meaning to go down well, i.e. like the *Titanic*. An entire terminology has sprung out of the highly polemicised debate about the would-be lifelong occupant of the key ninth seat on the Supreme Court's front bench.

People speak of being 'Borked-out' or 'De-Borked' or even 'Borkered' — increasingly, now that a slow and horrible death on the Senate floor awaits the one-time Yale University law professor who refused to fall on his sword. Was there a note of hesitancy in Ronald Reagan's promise to support Bork's fight to the end, as he got into the 'copter for Camp David? Is the White House reluctant to spill more weeks of blood for this former left-winger who spurned all their campaign suggestions in order to go it alone — thereby leaving an empty benchseat till 1988, and using up Reagan's last shreds of power?

As Bork jokes leapt from the lips of every chatshow host, the idiosyncratic professor and sophist stalked Capitol Hill corridors alone with his briefcase. The truth is that the man of the moment, by all accounts genial to his friends and cursed with an urge to 'épater la bourgeoisie', did badly in his trial by television. Unlike Colonel Oliver North, Bork lost the national plebiscite. He did not come across as *caring*, and people *want* a caring, consistent judge as well as one who is clever and fair. Yet the question of whether Bork got a fair hearing continues to heat the air above Washington.

His four and a half days of intensive questioning revealed some equivocally moderate views. 'Original intentionist' is Bork's own phrase, meaning he wants to interpret the old 'framers' intent in the 200-year-old Constitution literally and in its first sense. Debate raged on. Senate chairman Joe Biden called the Bork ordeal 'a national seminar on the Constitution' and said he was astounded at how much the man in the street wanted to clarify Bork's view on the letter of the Fourteenth Amendment. (The Fourteenth was the amendment which liberated blacks, who were considered to be just three-fifths of a free person and referred to as 'other persons' in the original Constitution document.)

Bork testified in great detail for over four days. Backing away from positions he had previously taken on women's rights and free speech and the Fourteenth Amendment 'equal protection' clause, he disavowed his extremist views and tried to present the picture of a tolerant moderate. This made some of the committee members suspicious rather than reassured. 'You're gone through a lot of changing ideas,' Senator Howell Heflin said to Bork at one stage and wondered aloud if Bork changed his mind 'only if a carrot is dangled before his eyes'. 'I can assure you that's not the way I operate,' Bork replied, in vain as it transpired.

It was the black Southern vote, roused by impressive black law professor Barbara Jordan (if only *she* were running for President), black judge Shirley Hustetler and other activists lassooed by the remarkable (and white) organiser Ralph Neas of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, that rang the bells of the critical Southern 'Dixiecrats'. Neas held his first strategy meeting before Reagan even announced his nominee. The next weekend, Teddy Kennedy phoned all his old civil rights contacts from Hyannis through the night. One by one the Dixiecrats abandoned their old Dixie ways and fell into the Biden camp, hostages of state electorates that in some cases are 90 per cent black.

The turning point of Bork's devastating defeat was the surprise negative vote of Democrat Howell Heflin in Alabama, who condemned Judge Bork's 'proclivity for extremism . . . because of my doubts, I must vote no.' The spectacle of Heflin making up his mind was an abiding image that helped mould public opinion, along with the minute scrutiny of all Bork's decisions by the former Philadelphia prosecutor Republican Senator Arlen Specter.

The last time a nominee lost because of public concern over his given views was back in 1930, when Howell Heflin's virulently racist uncle Tom Heflin was among Senators who switched decisively against President Hoover's nominee, Judge John Parker, ostensibly because he had made racist remarks. Again, there was a failing President on the ropes and a looming election. Do we have a repeat of 1930?

'Unpackagable Bork'

Pro-Borkers have blamed in-fighting at the White House between the Administration and the Justice Department for the mishandling of the campaign. Aide Tom Korologos conceded ruefully that Bork had not taken any administration advice. He blames the anti-Bork advertisements placed on television for Bork's embarrassing nine-to-five defeat. 'In the end the answers were all his [Bork's] . . . then the ads came, generating grass-roots opposition. I had thought it would be a fairer fight, on a higher level,' says Korologos. Interestingly, Korologos' successor Leonard Garment does not put the rout down to in-fighting. He blames the ad campaign, but adds something else. He says Bork himself was 'unpackagable'.

Leonard Garment is a fascinating and key figure in Washington: the man whom cognoscenti have long suspected of being Bob Woodward's 'Deep Throat'. Generally speaking, you do not see Garment. You just feel his breathing behind the scenes somewhere, taking up some lost cause of the New Right for reasons not immediately clear. For him to throw his lot in with Bork means that a) Garment sincerely feels Bork was done dirty; and b) he thinks Bork has a sporting chance of retrieving his honour, if not his vote.

Not by any stretch of the imagination the vote, of course. Not ever, if the rollcall of at least 53 names gleefully brandished for Friday's promised Senate floor vote by Californian Democrat Alan Cranston still holds. So why the national angst? Why has the appointment obsessed not just the politicians, but everyone?

Because the winners did not have a prayer a month ago — and now the losers are crying unfair. 'Mr Bork, I can promise you that this little item will ensure your every word gets a fair hearing', cried Senator Joe Biden, waving his gavel at the start. Bork *did* get his fair hearing, say the anti-Borkers — and if he had any more the public would have been even more hostile.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court continues to lack a ninth member, and faces possible deadlock in four-to-four or even postponed decisions with over 1,000 cases pending. The arrival of a Judge Bork would have tipped its ideological balance from four votes to five in favour of the right, reversing future decisions in many key issues affecting women, blacks, prisoners on death row, and the right to privacy, say anti-Borkers. The tilt to the right would realistically last into the next century, since at 60 Judge Bork is a mere child compared to the rest of the bench.

Old gents hang on

Like the old gents of a tontine, the four remaining liberal judges of the Supreme Court cling to the bench with the aid of a gruesome array of plastic valves, prostheses and pacemakers, and not two prostates left among the lot. Led by William Brennan, now in his eighties, they have sworn not to quit until Reagan goes back to his brushwood. With Reagan appointees now up to four, the pressure on them to survive becomes intense.

President Reagan has assiduously 'seeded' the lower district and appeal courts of America with judges of conservative record in an effort to influence the cases of the next century. These key judical appointments are made as hostages to posterity. Last year, the President won by a very narrow margin in the case of Justice William Rehnquist, who suffered more 'anti' votes than in any other case since the Parker vote in his election.

But last week the Supreme Court briskly passed 21 out of the new term's 1,000 cases for review. They include an appealed decision barring publishers at Random House from publishing Ian Hamilton's biography of J.D. Salinger with quotations from his letters still included, and a pre-trial appeal from former presidential advisor Michael Deaver in his case for perjury and presidential influence peddling.

A curious footnote is that Bork quite possibly would have been as moderate as the swing-voting liberal Judge Lewis Powell he meant to replace. Getting the seat mattered to him deeply. When he lost it he gave the glimpse of emotion people sought in vain during his testimony. 'I have no illusions,' he said, pathetically, vowing to fight unto death. Yes, he would have become anything, one felt, even moderate. But his successor will not be moderate — either Judge Patrick Higginbotham of Dallas, Judge Roger Miner of New York, or J. Clifford Wallace of San Diego, all the usual 'mentionees' on the Reagan list.

The successor to defeated Judge Parker in 1930, incidentally, was not liberal but conservative — and after being confirmed in less than one minute by an exhausted Senate, he proceeded to block Roosevelt's New Deal and make FDR's life a misery. Whose life will Higginbotham — perhaps — make a misery? Biden, who has been urged to rejoin the '88 campaign? Or his colleague with the Roosevelt suit, Paul Simon? Or Bork's campaign leader who wanted him to concede defeat, Republican Party chief Bob Dole? □

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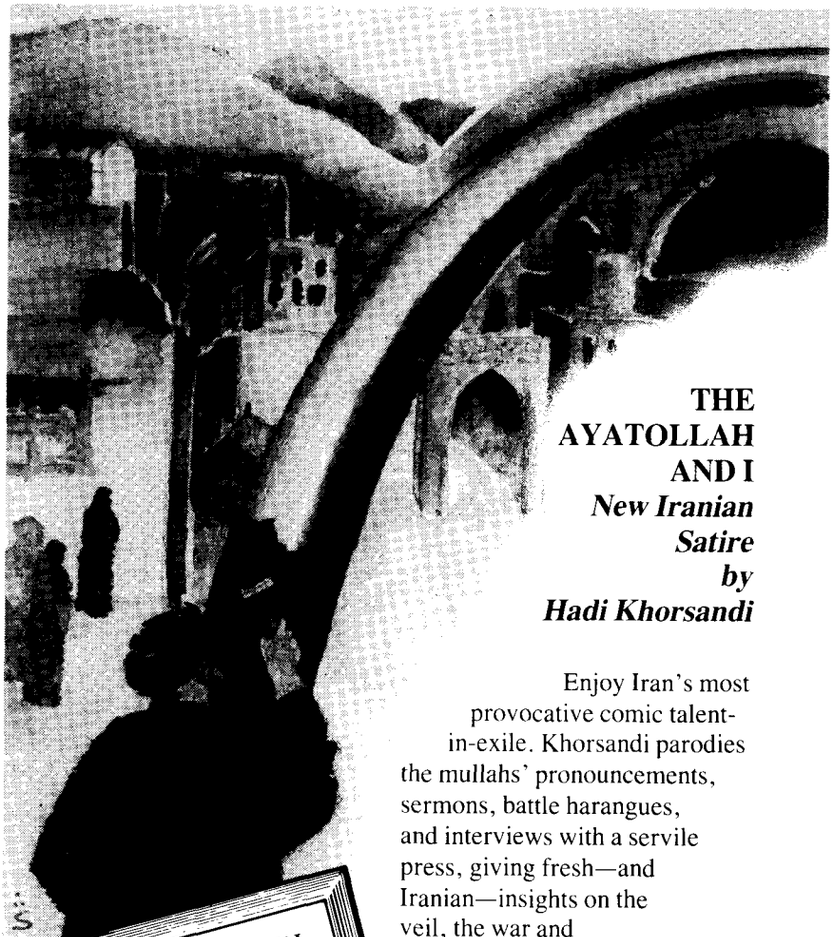

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Tibet slips out of the human family

The revolt in Tibet is of a people fighting for continued existence.
An NS staff report

THERE'S A fine essay in the current issue of *Daedalus* by John Hall, which makes the following necessary point:

> It behooves liberals to be careful in rendering judgement on the savageries required for modernisation . . . total social engineering is always savage and should not be romanticised. Insofar as such engineering achieves the transition to industrial society, however, it needs to be accepted by liberals: the creation of modern societies may not bring freedom, but it does relieve poverty and disease.

Liberals, and all on the left of politics, do indeed need to bear that in mind: and to bear it in mind when reading of the anti-Chinese riots in Tibet. For while the Chinese themselves now include in their catalogue of past errors the treatment of Tibet, especially during the cultural revolution, the claim now is that the development of Tibet, coupled with its release from the horrors of a uniquely monastic feudalism, make it 'worthwhile'. Is it?

Judgment is not helped by a dispute about Tibet's national status in the two and half centuries before the Chinese Communists occupied it in 1950. The Chinese, and many others, see the period as one where China exercised some sort of hegemony over Tibet: the Tibetans, also with many supporters, claim that Tibet was an independent state, though one which had no diplomatic presence in other countries. The International Commission of Jurists decided, in 1912, that it *was* independent: but when the British authorities in India made a treaty with the country in 1913, they recognised Chinese suzerainty.

Of Western experts on the country, Chris Mullin, the Labour MP for Gateshead (who wrote an acute report on the country for the Minority Rights Group*) believes that 'When the Peoples' Liberation Army started to move into Tibet they were merely pursuing the historic claim of Chinese governments that Tibet was an inalienable part of China.' But Dr Michael van Walt, author of a recent book, *The Status of Tibet,* argues that Chinese hegemony was never a reality. 'There were two representatives in Lhasa in the Manchu period, with some 50 military bodyguards. They were like the British Resident in Nepal: but Britain never had sovereignty over Nepal.'

China's rule enforced

Most agree that the first years of Chinese direct rule, after 1950, were relatively benign. But by the mid-1950s, the pace of change quickened in the eastern areas (Tibet is as big as Western Europe) and there were serious riots in 1956. By 1959, as the Tibetan leaders tried to appease the Chinese, disaffection spread: in 1959, a revolt in Lhasa was crushed and the Dalai Lama fled to India with thousands of followers.

Thereafter Chinese rule grew harsher. Hundreds of thousands of Tibetans were jailed or used as conscripted labourers; struggle sessions against landlords and priests were instituted in villages; some 80 per cent of the monasteries were destroyed. The struggle sessions — or *thumzings* — were described by many participants after as a kind of torture, in which physical brutality was used and from which many sought to escape by committing suicide.

The period of the cultural revolution, from 1966, took the struggle to a new intensity: many of the young Red Guards were themselves Tibetans; although some commentators, like Richard Avedon, a former *Newsweek* journalist who has just submitted a testimony on Tibet to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, claim that the Tibetan recruits knew nothing of ideology. Commune farms were introduced, forcibly; the destruction of religion pushed ahead; and the refugee columns into India increased.

The worst of it was over by the early 1970s: but it was not until 1979 that the Chinese made serious steps to 'correct past mistakes'. Hu Yao-Bang, the Communist Party's general secretary, visited Tibet, professed himself shocked by what he saw, and promulgated a six-point programme which laid stress on respect for national culture: demanding 'uniformity in everything' was condemned as 'subjectivist'.

> ***However generous a judgment is made by however liberal a mind, the Chinese treatment of Tibet emerges as a model of brutality and, potentially, genocide***

In 1980, a number of groups from the exiled Tibetan community were allowed carefully staged tours of the country: at the same time, the Chinese government entered into talks with the Dalai Lama seeking his return as a national figurehead. The talks dragged on for some four years, but secured no agreement.

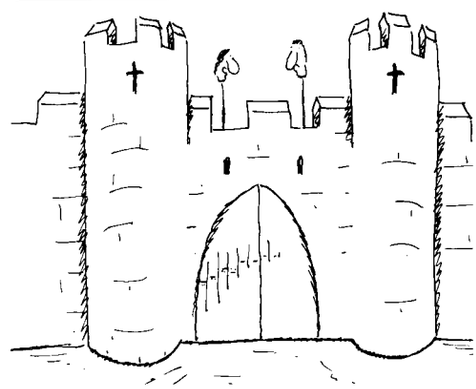
'Tibet is finished'

The largest reason for their failure, according to van Walt, was that the Chinese had replaced their previous efforts to crush Tibetan resistance with a policy of swamping: *a policy which has already succeeded.* The six million Tibetans now have 7.5 million ethnic Chinese, or Han, living with them, most tempted there by grants of land and extra income paid by Peking. In Lhasa, there are 150,000 Han to 50,000 Tibetans. The Chinese army has some 250,000 soldiers in the country. Avedon quotes one Western aid worker as saying: 'Tibet is finished'.

Avedon's testimony, the harshest of all the Western Tibet watchers, claims that the legacy of China's rule to 1979 was:

- 1.2 million Tibetans dead — one sixth of the population;
- more than 6,000 monasteries destroyed and their art sold or melted down;
- some 60 per cent of Tibetan books burned;
- two thirds of the territory now annexed to China, with only central and parts of eastern Tibet remaining as the Tibet Autonomous Region;

*See *The Tibetans,* available from MRG, 29 Craven Street, London WC2N 5NT; *Tibet Today,* from US Tibet Comittee, 107 East 31st Street, New York, NY 10016; *The Status of Tibet,* Wisdom Publications, 23 Dering Street, London W1R 9AA.



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● Amdo province has become China's 'gulag', capable of containing up to 10 million (mainly Chinese) prisoners.

Mullin's judgment, written in 1981, was that 'it seems to have been the object of official Chinese policy since the cultural revolution to sinocise the Tibetan people with little regard for local feelings.' Avedon's conclusion, given last month to the Senate committee, was more pessimistic but essentially the same: 'Whichever party line, moderate or radical, emerges from China's current transition, it is plain that Tibet's future remains in extreme jeopardy. Less dramatic perhaps than invasion or revolt, the demographic shift, via its impact on every aspect of Tibetan life, may nevertheless end Tibet's tenure as a distinct member of the human family.'

But what of the care with which liberals should make judgments on savageries? Have the savageries which have, on any account, been inflicted on the Tibetan people nevertheless bequeathed them a present and a future which promises more than their immediate past? Economic development has certainly improved the people's life chances: serious famine has not occurred since 1980; the lumber business has taken off and China claims to pump some $2.7bn into the region. There is some minor industrialisation — a farm equipment plant has been built in Lhasa, and there are paper and dairy plants and a match factory.

There is a further industry, one with the best prospects. Some 30,000 tourists passed through Lhasa last year, and Beijing's target of 100,000 a year is likely to be met. 'There is little doubt,' says Avedon, 'that tourism will come to support much of the Chinese community in Central Tibet.' A more mordant judgment is made by Jamyang Norbu, an expatriate Tibetan quoted by Avedon, who said that 'A holiday in Tibet is subsidising the eventual extinction of the Tibetan race'.

A sense of extinction

It is this sense of extinction which, van Wald believes, lies behind the revolts in Tibet today. Many of these acts of revolt, he says, are being carried out by young Tibetans educated to be cadres in China — and rendered Tibetan nationalists by the attitude of the Chinese — and by monks who have returned to the monasteries under the more liberal regime. Van Wald acknowledges the contradiction that, as the Chinese seek to be more liberal, they create more scope for dissent.

A final point. Unlike many of the 'colonies' of the Soviet and the Chinese blocs, Tibet has produced virtually no cadres of its own. There are Tibetans in high positions, but they are titular heads, with the Chinese holding all the posts of power. The Panchen Lama, the second highest religious official, is kept in Beijing with nominal authority, but is not fully trusted. Van Wald says that prospective Tibetan leaders are deterred by the contempt with which they are treated by the Chinese — and deterred, too, by the hatred of all Tibetans for the Chinese whom they now see not just as conquerors, but as obliterators.

So far, economic advance has brought some material benefits, but not many: education, medicine and services are primitive, while the prisons are still full of dissidents. However generous a judgment is made by however liberal a mind, the Chinese treatment of Tibet, over the past four decades, emerges as a model of brutality and, potentially, genocide. □

ABORTION

Breaking a silence

Liberal MP David Alton's bill to limit abortions to pregnancies of 18 weeks or less will come before this parliament.* SARAH SPENCER *reports on a part of the UK where access to abortion is already limited

SIX YEARS ago, when 'Dorothy' was 14, her father made her pregnant. In Belfast this did not guarantee her an abortion. The 1967 Abortion Act has never been extended to Northern Ireland and the rare circumstances in which abortion is lawful are nowhere clearly defined.

In Dorothy's case a consultant eventually agreed that the pregnancy should be terminated. As she was already more than 20 weeks pregnant, it was necessary for her to be given a prostaglandin drip over a period of 48 hours. The consultant initiated this treatment, and went off duty. But some hours later, after Dorothy's labour had begun, the doctor on night duty removed the drip because he had ethical objections to abortion. The following night a woman doctor, discovering this, restored the drip and the pregnancy was terminated.

Dorothy's case was one of many reported to the International Tribunal on Abortion which heard evidence in Belfast last week. Established to 'consider the effects of the continuing exclusion of Northern Ireland from the terms of the Abortion Act 1967', the Tribunal included doctors and lawyers, a journalist, a Member of the European Parliament, and experts from Germany and Holland. Defying the convention in Northern Ireland that abortion is a taboo subject, the Northern Ireland Abortion Law Reform Association (NIALRA) organised a high-profile event in Belfast's Europa Hotel, determined to give women the opportunity to break their silence in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

For two days we heard moving personal testimony and disturbing evidence from doctors, lawyers and advice agencies. The fact that, 20 years after the 1967 Act, this story needed to be told, and that it was at last being told, publicly, in Belfast's premier hotel, was extraordinary. Yet it received almost no press coverage in Northern Ireland and none in Britain. While the women broke their silence, the media did not.

There are no statistics on the number of abortions carried out in Northern Ireland because there is no official procedure for notifying terminations on the rare occasions they take place. The legal basis of these abortions is unclear. The Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, which reached Northern Ireland in 1945, allowed, for the first time, abortion *after* (but not before) 28 weeks to preserve the life of the mother. This law still coexists with the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act which promises 'penal servitude for life' to anyone procuring an 'unlawful' abortion. This wording implied the existence of a 'lawful' abortion and a test case in 1938 established that an abortion was lawful if the continued pregnancy would leave the woman a 'physical or mental wreck'. No official guidance is given to doctors on the interpretation to be put on this case law and the evidence we received indicated that they were generally unwilling to exploit the opportunity it provides.

> ***"Women in Northern Ireland suffer "enormous psychological distress and unacceptable financial burdens as a result of the lack of abortion provision"***

A GP told us of one such case. His patient, 'Jane', who had consented to her story being told, was 26 when she found she was 11 weeks pregnant. She had four young children, suffered bouts of anxiety and depression and was experiencing difficulties in her marriage. Her husband was hostile to the pregnancy and she wanted a termination. Her GP referred her to a psychiatrist for an assessment. He refused on what he called 'ethical grounds'. Jane also had physical ill health — a congenital heart defect and chronic kidney infection. The consultant to whom she was referred for termination on these grounds pronounced her fit to continue the pregnancy. Unable to afford the fare to England for an abortion, Jane had the unwanted baby.

Hemmed in by silence

Since 1978, over 20,000 women have travelled to Britain from Northern Ireland to have abortions. These official statistics conceal many more who gave addresses in Britain, as those coming from Northern Ireland are not covered by the NHS and have to pay. The total cost of the round trip, some £270, is not the only obstacle these women have to overcome. Most striking, in the evidence given to the Tribunal, was the emotional isolation, the fear, the lack of medical support on the journey back and above all the secrecy: 'I think the worst thing is knowing other people's attitudes to it and realising that if your family knew you'd be disowned completely' . . . 'Because you have to travel, there is a whole sense of illegality — criminalisation almost . . . you're put through this incredible process of secrecy, made to feel a criminal, sneaking off to England for a weekend and not telling people where you have been.' 'Alison', who, for two and half years told no one that she had had an abortion, said she felt 'hemmed in by silence and the fear that anyone should know'.

The unavailability of abortion has had a further surprising but direct consequence. It has prevented the introduction in Northern Ireland of screening procedures to detect neural tube defects (such as spina bifida) and Downs syndrome, tests which are available as a matter of course in the rest of the United Kingdom. *Northern Ireland now has*

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the highest rate of babies born with neural tube defects in the world.

Relief of suffering

There are further consequences. Few agencies provide non-directive counselling on abortion and women who attend family planning clinics for a post abortion check-up or contraception are not always warmly received. This, and the apparent lack of knowledge in hospitals of the most up-to-date medical procedures for abortion, highlighted for the Tribunal the significance of the Lane Committee report on the 1967 Abortion Act. It concluded, in 1974, that the Act had 'relieved a vast amount of individual suffering. It has helped to focus attention on the paramount need for preventive action, for more education in sexual life and its responsibilities, and for the widespread provision of contraceptive advice and facilities. It has served to stimulate research into all aspects of abortion and the development of safer operative techniques. These have been undeniably great benefits.'

The Tribunal concluded that women in Northern Ireland suffer 'enormous emotional and psychological distress and unacceptable financial burdens as a result of the lack of abortion provision'. It found that doctors were imposing their individual, religious, moral and ethical judgments on women and that the ambiguity in the law enabled them to suspend their professional judgement and refuse an abortion even in the limited circumstances when it would be lawful. It also found that, as a consequence, women had been denied basic preventative medical care. The Tribunal recognised that the 1967 Act is itself inadequate. Women in Britain are still denied the right to make their own decision about their pregnancy. But women in Northern Ireland should have at least the same rights as women in the rest of the UK.

The government has said that the law should not be extended to Northern Ireland until it has broad community support. In the 1984 debate on this issue in the Northern Ireland Assembly, the 21 men present voted against the Act 20:1. The 20,000 women who had been forced to travel to England to secure an abortion were not represented, nor the 58.1 per cent of Northern Ireland doctors who recently told NIALRA that they support the extension of the 1967 Act. The question is surely whether those who are opposed to abortion should continue to be allowed to deny the freedom of choice to those who are not.

The Tribunal has succeeded in breaking the silence. While women in Britain are preparing to defend the rights which we already have from the ravages of the Alton Bill, women in Northern Ireland have taken the first significant step towards achieving their own right to choose. □

The members of the International Tribunal were: Dr Wendy Savage (gynaecologist), Dr Fay Hutchinson (Brook Advisory Service), Kader Asmal (Senior Lecturer in Law, Trinity College Dublin), Julie Grant (NUS Women's Officer), Sabine Klein Schonnefeld (University of Bremen), Melanie McFadyean (journalist), Lucy Smitz (International Planned Parenthood Federation, Holland), Carol Tongue (MEP) and Sarah Spencer.

Sarah Spencer is general secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

MEDIA

'He's got a moral objection!'

John Sweeney

THE RECEIVED view from the government benches in the Commons is that all the big lies in modern journalism appear on the television screen; those lies are more dangerous because television is the much more powerful medium. As a journalist who started in print, has worked in current affairs television, and is now returning to full-time writing, this notion jars with my personal experiences of both media.

My first shift in Fleet Street lasted 49 minutes. Clutching a Yorkshire press award, I had been invited to work on the *Sunday People*. The first half-hour passed peaceably enough, drinking tea and reading the papers. Then it was suggested by someone who talked like an extra in *Minder* that I go to a massage parlour in Hackney, where I should inquire from the women about how much they charge for 'handjobs, Greek — that means anal, John — and the extras. Take your clothes off, but just ask for a massage. Ask them to talk dirty to you, or something, but don't actually do anything, all right?' It was not all right.

Eventually, one of the more sensitive types in the office worked it all out. 'It's moral. He's got a moral objection.' It was like an H.E. Bateman cartoon. They all stared at the man with the moral objection with wonder and fascination. I walked towards the door, knowing two things: that I didn't want to work for the *Sunday People* again and that 'Greek' meant anal.

I moved up-market and found myself sitting in the Insight office in the pre-Wapping *Sunday Times*, surrounded by dozens of shopping trolleys. The trolleys, for a magazine Tried and Tested feature, had taken the place of journalists like Phillip Knightley and Bruce Page. The *Sunday Times* was not the paper I had been enthralled by as a boy.

In east London, there is a current fashion for the young and droll to use a gold paint spray to adorn the dog ordure which litters the pavements. These gilt-turds are the things which spring to mind whenever I have looked into the journalism of the *Sun* and its editor, Kelvin MacKenzie. The Maria MacKay interview: faked. The shot of the west London vicarage rape victim: on the front page. Yet Norman Tebbit was happy to sip lemonade with Mac-Kenzie in alcohol-free Wapping. Presumably, they discussed the poor standards of *Panorama*.

The 'new-look' *Star* appears to be just an argentum version of the gilt-turd. Consider, for example, the article, accompanied by alluring pictures, which quoted a 15-year-old schoolgirl with a 40-inch bust who 'quite enjoyed' the first part of a sexual attack. 'No, I never said that,' she told me. The paper's editor, Mike Gabbert admitted on *This Week* that, in retrospect, the relevant lines were a little 'too raunchy'.

THE CONTRAST between this sort of journalism and Granada's *World In Action*, TVS's *Facing South* and Thames's *This Week* could not be more stark. I was never asked to do anything remotely immoral or improper. Hours and hours would be spent in the cutting room arguing about whether this particular piece of sync was 'fair' and 'balanced'. Programmes would be re-worked and re-written if a particular fact or angle could not be stood up.

Government policy-makers will not have had the benefit of this below-stairs observation. But, in my experience, current affairs television journalism has nothing to worry about in terms of ethics and honesty; the foulest journalism is to be found in a Fleet Street dripping with government peerages and knighthoods. There are many excellent journalists in Fleet Street working on tabloid and, more often, quality papers, but the worst offences are committed on paper, not film.

People who work in television should not feel too pious about their better standards. There are four reasons why rigour is the rule in television, and three of them are not necessarily noble.

The first is structural. Any current affairs television team consists of at least two people, often three. No individual can push through a story or an angle without arguing it out with his colleagues. In Fleet Street, the onus for accuracy and honesty rests more often than not on the narrow shoulders of individual hacks. The second point is financial. A television crew is an expensive thing to shift around the countryside. Before doing any filming, it makes financial sense to check and research the story. This means that fewer corners are cut, more stories are bottomed out before the cameras roll.

The third is regulatory. Compared to that sore-gummed, watery-eyed dachshund, the Press Council, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission is a dobermann pinscher. The BBC sets strict guidelines, and woe betide the trespasser. If found guilty, a programme must broadcast an on-air adjudication which is not so easily buried as a few critical paragraphs on p.14. No wonder a hack like Ray Mills of the *Star* is so contemptuous of the Press Council that he publicly boasts that he holds the All-Comers Record For Press Council Complaints.

The fourth is more complex. It stems from a discernible spirit within the current affairs television world. It is easy to sound pompous, yet there is a palpable sense of journalistic *responsibility* in television, of owing something to the viewers, which is almost wholly lacking in Fleet Street.

What's so disappointing about Fleet Street's coarse-grained attitude is that it's schizophrenic: be rude to the poor and the powerless, be sweet to power. So it's splendid copy humiliating a few part-time prostitutes, but don't doorstep the editor of the *Sun*, for God's sake.

The present attack on current affairs television, waged for different and perhaps pernicious reasons, is forceful and powerfully-backed; it may succeed. But compared to the disgusting behaviour of much of Fleet Street, television has got nothing to be ashamed of. □

John Sweeney was the researcher on This Week's *'Battle for the Bottom'.*

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ARTS

CINEMA

The matter with kids today

Judith Williamson

The Love Child (15)
Metro, Cannon Chelsea
River's Edge (18)
Curzon West End

Live ammunition, blank generation. Feck (Dennis Hopper) tries to get a reaction out of Layne (Crispin Glover) in *River's Edge*

DIFFERENT AS THESE FILMS are, they both address the same question: what has happened to the children of the '60s generation? And how is their experience of society different, growing up today?

The Love Child (a Frontroom workshop production funded by the BFI and Channel Four) raises these issues directly by making its orphaned hero, Dillon, the son of a '60s musician from a psychedelic band, the Pink Frogs. The antithesis of a hippy, anti-drugs and clean-living, Dillon lives in a council flat with his grandmother Edith (Sheila Hancock), does a clerical job and tries to be totally normal. But when he comes into contact with the new urban underclass through Bernadette, a painter squatting down the road, and two anarchist Pink Frogs fans Cliff and Elvis, who get him stoned on magic mushrooms, his 'normality' starts to slip and he ends up arriving at work in crazy make-up, wiping an entire programme from the office computer and getting the sack. The final touch to his initiation into street life/lumpen existence (depending on how you analyse it) is his arrest when the police bust Cliff and Elvis' flat. The film ends with a party where young and old are reconciled and the spirit of the '60s seems to live on.

The style is a mixture of social realism and comedy — a formula with antecedents in a film like *Billy Liar*. However, *The Love Child*'s use of extreme — therefore 'comic' — camera-angles and overtly *Billy Liar*-ish touches like a talking toilet don't really come off. Its most immediate strength is its realism, being one of the very few contemporary British films which actually deals with a world I live in, where social lines are drawn between 'respectable' council tenants and stylish squatters, where the tension between an established working-class culture and a new urban culture of the dispossessed is felt on every block.

The Love Child is very acute in its feel for this shift of values; but it's almost the same shift that makes its own tone and style uncertain. On one level, it is a warm-hearted story of resilience in hard times; the Sheila Hancock sub-plot in particular has a boldly feminist and anti-ageist point to it. Yet earlier in the film comedy is used rather uncomfortably to make us laugh at, as much as with, Edith (it is supposed to be funny that she buys Lean Cuisine).

The film is structured like *Something Wild*, with the now familiar American-yuppy-being-dragged-into-bohemia (two class *un*-specifics) replaced by the more specific scenario of clean-cut, working-class boy dragged into the sub-culture of the moment. And it is here that the parallels with the '60s are drawn, perhaps spuriously; dope, funky clothes and laid-backness invoke the spirit of an earlier counter-culture, eliding the much more desperate dispossession of today with the — on the whole — deliberate dropping out of the hippy era. The ending embraces an optimism which in itself has a '60s feel; something deeply welcome, but strangely anachronistic and incongruous.

Tim Hunter's **River's Edge** is as different in tone and sensibility as it could possibly be, but its protagonists are, like Dillon, the children of '60s parents, and just as *The Love Child* refers back to that era partly through the use of Sheila Hancock, it too uses an actor — Dennis Hopper — to invoke a whole period. *River's Edge* has been heavily publicised for its shock value: based on a true story, it is essentially about the inaction of a group of schoolkids in a small Californian town who find that one of their classmates, Samson, has killed his girlfriend. They take trips to see the body but take no steps to tell the police for several days.

The film deliberately backs off from attempting to explain the kids' behaviour: when someone asks two violent pre-teens why they're such delinquents, their reply — 'because of our fucked-up childhoods' — is presented ironically. Nevertheless they are shown against the backdrop of a bleak, commercially-oriented society and the influence of the media is carefully suggested with the manic teenager Layne, the driving force behind the cover-up, invoking Chuck Norris and Starsky and Hutch in his notions of group loyalty.

But the bleakness of *River's Edge* is not only in its subject; it is also a function of the film's own refusal to comment. The horror is supposed to come from the fact that killing someone is self-evidently awful, making the kids' lack of response self-evidently shocking. But the film itself gives us very little to respond *to* (apart from the body of a girl we didn't know) and the viewer is, in a way, left as affectless the kids appear to be.

However, within the film, characters left over from the '60s appear in somewhat caricatured form precisely to berate the kids for their lack of emotion. A teacher talks nostalgically about the hippy movement. An ineffective young mother tells off her teenage sons for smoking dope in the house when they are in fact borrowing hers.

But the key '60s figure is the Hopper character, Feck, a decrepit ex-biker who, like Samson, once killed a woman. The difference, crucially, is that Feck killed out of passion — 'I loved her' — but all Samson can say about the girl he killed is, 'She was OK.' It is Feck who finally does what the kids are unable to do and takes action against Samson.

Unlike *The Love Child* which looks at the grim present through the utopian comic forms of the '60s, *River's Edge* looks at the relics of counter-culture through the grim eyes of the present.

Perhaps the unexpected success of this film is as interesting a phenomenon as anything in it, for evidently it touches a nerve about 'kids today' which stands for a more general anxiety about present values. *River's Edge* reproduces that anxiety; *The Love Child* attempts to counteract it with a little '60s spirit.

Each in its way speaks from the widening chasm between, not the hippies and their children, but the society that hippies grew up in and that which confronts kids today.

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MUSIC

With care

Andrew Clements

Le nozze di Figaro
Covent Garden

THE NEW OPERA season in London has opened without any particular distinction. English National's *Pacific Overtures* was expected to be the early highlight and to set ENO off on another year of flair and enterprise, but its tepidity — and the downright silliness of the new production of Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* which followed it at the Coliseum — have provided little scope for enthusiasm there.

The Royal Opera wriggled out of its chorus strike with a fortnight's lost performances and then proceeded with a series of hapless revivals that might have been happily sacrificed to the dispute. Its first chance to make some amends is the new staging of *Figaro*, which is not only Bernard Haitink's first new production since he became the Opera's Music Director, but also signals the British debut of the much admired West German director Johannes Schaaf.

After so much at Covent Garden that has been ill-prepared and approximate in recent seasons, any production that is scrupulously observed and thoroughly rehearsed deserves a warm welcome. There is nothing unconventional about the context of this *Figaro*: sets and costumes (by Xenia Hausner and Peter Pabst) place it firmly in the 18th century; the liverish assortment of colours — a richly decorated cupola, flowing, red-hued drapes, primary-coloured dress — offers visual stimulation. Yet Schaaf's handling of character seems thoroughly contemporary, or at least is examined from the perspective of the late 20th century. The first act goes marvellously, full of sharp looks, subtly inflected motives, unspoken doubts, and sets up the characters of Susanna and Figaro with profound care: this Figaro is thoroughly ensnared by this Susanna, yet tempers his love with uncertainty. Is the horseplay with Cherubino perfectly innocent? Are the Count's advances so totally repulsive?

Act 2 begins with equal perception, presenting a Countess who has sought refuge from a faithless marriage in the sick-bed and the bottle, but begins thereafter to lose its control. The closet farce of the second-act finale is frantic and overdone, and the remaining setpieces are untidily arranged, overloaded with busy detail and unable to transfer the slick sense of timing of earlier scenes to the chorus.

Much of the characterisation, though, remains intact. After so many years of stock, coarse-grained Figaros at Covent Garden, Claudio Desderi's careful sense of proportion, minute attention to verbal nuance and total lack of self-regarding histrionics is a constant joy; he is perpetually smitten with fears — will this marriage of Figaro endure? — so that the end of the opera is less than wholly affirmative. The events have left their mark; it is not just the Count who is a sadder and wiser man. As the source of all his worries, the Susanna of Marie McLaughlin is irresistibly attractive and provocative: it is almost as if she should be singing *'Se vuol ballare'*, manipulating the class structure, pulling the strings and well aware that a working-class marriage will be no less complicated than that of her masters.

McLaughlin and Desderi, together with Thomas Allen's marvellously complete, cruel, vindictive Count, are the evening's principal pleasures; Karita Mattila's Countess — uneasy, vocally uneven — and Stella Kleindienst's callow, insipid Cherubino are its chief disappointments. Sarah Walker's Marcellina was an inspired piece of casting, a perfectly finished portrayal, and Robert Tear makes a good deal of Basilio.

Haitink's conducting is immensely powerful, alive to the music's darker layers: if nothing onstage indicated that this was something more than a comedy of manners, his shaping of the critical points — the Act 2 finale underpinned with vivid rhythmic bite, the closing scenes of the opera given an almost desperate gaiety — would tell everything. At times the dovetailing of recitative and aria was less than ideally fluent; matters like that will be solved in performance. Meanwhile, whatever its shortcomings, the Royal Opera has got a production of one of its staples that should see long and rewarding service. No doubt it will have to. □

TELEVISION

Tragedy as farce

Hugo Williams

WE HAVE BEEN brought up to believe that naturalism is the thing for television: nothing too wild. Brecht, Brooke, expressionism: any kind of artificiality slips off its curved edges into the cocoa.

Jim Catwright's **Road** (BBC 2) — directed and adapted from the Royal Court production by Alan Clarke, who brought you *Scum* (borstals) and *Made in Britain* (skinheads) — finally exploded this assumption, using all manner of untelevisual devices: soliloquies, asides, even poetry. He gave his characters their own piece of theatre to perform, a time-honoured as well as Brechtian climax-breaker traditionally denied to TV folk peeping through the window of their little bathos-sphere.

Cartwright and Clarke's success was proved next morning when people kept ringing in on **Open Air** (BBC1) saying it was exactly like their lives. 'It was easy to forget we were watching television,' said one girl of this near Morality Play; the reason being that she wasn't. The comments brought it home with a bang that extreme situations, like those in the unemployed inner cities, produce their own extreme forms of expression, which eventually become natural to them, to the point of violence. This is, presumably, how history happens. 'Life in certain parts of northern England is a tragedy played like a farce,' Alan Bleasdale has said. Let someone try these startling techniques — pioneered to a certain extent by Dennis Potter — on the affluent, naturalistic South-East and we would soon see that surrealism itself is nothing more than a clash of form on content: tinderbox art.

Road isn't *about* much. Two women pick up a couple of weirdos at a dance, go back to a squat and get drunk. It's what they *say* that is magic. The climax is a kind of ritual available to anyone: you drink a bottle of wine, put on Otis Redding's *Try a Little Tenderness* ('O she may be weary, and young girls do get weary, wearing that same old shaggy dress . . . '), then give voice to your innermost feelings. There is something about the contrast of roughness and youth with Otis' sobbing tenderness that plumbs the depths and delivers the goods — if you can keep from crying, that is.

In the run-up to this theme are various cameos of desolation, in particular the smiling-sad speech of a middle-aged man who remembers when everything was so different in his life. 'You even lit a cigarette differently in those days. You never complained. And everyone was an apprentice to something or other. *Volare!* The hit parade! The girls had their cardigans over their arms. Even the word "sex" feels different now. No matter what they say I can't see how that time could turn into this . . .' He may not, but we can see it all too clearly in this so very *writerly* re-evaluation of what we had been persuaded was good television. But I dare say nothing will come of it. 'The characters weren't likeable,' thought Mike Shaft, presenter of *Open Air*. 'Therefore one doesn't care what happens to them.' His two dim-bulb yuplets on the consulting sofa were of the same opinion, alas.

The big success of the season is supposed to be **The Dame Edna Experience** (ITV). The show business folk on **Did You See?** (BBC2) were incoherent with adulation for its satirical sus, its 'many layers of subtlety' — presumably they were referrring to the fact that Dame Edna is a man dressed as a woman, whose discourse occasionally acknowledges this. Pamela Stephenson even went so far as to refer to Barry Humphries as 'Billy', than which there can be no higher praise.

Could it be that men of satirical sus shine by comparison to most actors? No, Humphries actually is good. His travesty lowers audience resistance to his cleverness, also to its bite: one forgets momentarily where to place the blame. He's able to be very knowing and rude under the guise of his chosen clown. 'You're Royalty yourself, in a spooky (catchword) little way,' he told Lord Litchfield. 'If there was an awful tragedy you could be King . . . and I wouldn't be far behind you.' It was fun hearing Jerry Hall's fashion-plate Texan come to life: 'I quite like the designer Anthony Prarse (Price)', but even Charlton Heston had to get his double to fall down the entry stairs for him in order to appear as anything more than a pale acolyte of the main attraction. Perhaps the day of the actor-celebrity is drawing to a long-awaited close? We have been disappointed by their ordinariness too long and it has finally got through to us why they all clamour to get on the lowest quiz-game: they are all waiting to be asked to do the next Martini commercial.

The Dame Edna Experience is actually a suave demolition job on the genre. Stars great and small are required to put on a form of invisible drag in order to play straight-person to her Queen; they are invariably sent home with their charismas round their ankles. Even Germaine Greer.

If the chat-show format is a thing of the past, conversation itself may be in the ascendant. **Sport**

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Is a Tough Business (C4), a series of interviews with wheelers and dealers by Hugh McIlvanny, is no *Face to Face* affair, but the American subjects seem to lay themselves no less open to the scalpel of McIlvanny's careful Scottish English. 'He's a very huggable fellow,' said Jimmy Jacobs of his protégé world heavyweight champ Mike Tyson. Tyson was discovered at the age of 13 by trainer Cuss Demato, whom Jacobs also lived with for ten years. 'He's a huggy bear,' said Jacobs. 'He'll put his hand on my face while I'm talking. He's a very *huggy* young boy.' □

THEATRE

A louder silence

Victoria Radin

Tattoo Theatre
MLADEN MATERIĆ *Almeida Theatre*
Savage in Limbo
JOHN PATRICK SHANLEY *Gate Theatre*
Ambulance
GREGORY MOTTON *Theatre Upstairs*
The War in Heaven
JOSEPH CHAIKIN and SAM SHEPARD *Theatre Upstairs*

AN ADULT-SIZED, somersaulting, pantomime rabbit gambols through the Yugoslavian **Tattoo Theatre** without inflicting the slightest tone of whimsy. It is rather as if the squirrels and bears invented by the warring couple in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* had come to life and appropriated a will, not entirely beneficient, of their own.

Tattoo Theatre resembles *Look Back in Anger*, being the story of the disintegration of the relationship between a man and a woman, but it is told without fancy, exhibitionist rhetoric or, indeed, any words at all. Movement, mime, music, lighting and a complete kitchen-sink set detail the progress, by turns tender and brutal, of a sexual union. The union fails but the evening leaves one invigorated and enlightened. It is a gorgeous piece of theatre.

Mladen Materić, who is credited with its authorship and direction, is Professor of Stage Movement at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo and his six young performers are part of the local theatre group. They all had five months of rehearsal — our major companies rarely take more than eight or 12 weeks — during which, I should guess, the piece was born out of intense improvisational work. We hang too much on words in life, as in our theatre, whose bent towards quasi-documentary realism, born out of the success of 1960s and 1970s television drama, is only now beginning to give way to an exploration of routes to non-verbal communication. Wordless, the people in *Tattoo Theatre* are nevertheless complete characters, whom we come to know intimately by their gestures, facial expressions, movements and changes in rhythm, in the unconscious, animal way which forms the basis of our appraisals of others in life.

The story, too, is beautifully complete, from the moment the man — a slim, slicked-back black-haired, impetuous contrast to his demure but quixotically passionate blonde wife — brands each of them with a talismanic tattoo of their love. That dancing rabbit is the reincarnation of a toy he gives her: at first a gentle, playful household god, it later becomes uncontrollable, tempting each away from unity, towards doubt and self love. The wife discovers her husband is having affairs; he leaves; she has her fling; he returns but she can't accept him; neither can do without the other. The final image shows the couple, tender and resigned, dusting one another's hair with the white that signals their descent into an old age against which all their previous striving and hoping and fighting can do nothing. As tangible as real people — and as evanescent, arbitrary and incapable of living up to the best in themselves — the pair become all of us and everyone we know. To watch this faultlessly performed evening is akin to witnessing one's own familiar and surprising dreams. *Tattoo* also contains enough information on the nature of sexual politics — and, if I may say so, its ultimate imperviousness to the tidier ideals of feminism — to stuff a library. It ends on Saturday: if you can, go.

Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Commeth* aspired to a state of mute poeticism and has become the progenitor for the thriving if unsatisfying genre of the American bar-room play. Robert Patrick in *Kennedy's Children*, Lanford Wilson in *Balm in Gilead* and now John Patrick Shanley in **Savage in Limbo** have all attempted this quintessentially American and typically solipsistic form.

Shanley has a sense of linguistic confusion, signalling a psychic chaos, of working-class America that recalls David Mamet (another exponent of garrulous stasis). Its flaw is self-pity. But, like most of the genre, *Savage* affords a great opportunity for its performers to let rip in the sort of italicised style which gives precedence to a body language over words; and Robert Hickson's direction extracts from the cast, in particular Fiona Victory, Denise Stephenson and Alan Polonsky, some of the most compelling performances in town.

In **Ambulance** Gregory Motton offers what I can't help seeing as the British version of the genre: post-Beckett tramps in a wasteland, post-Pinter insinuating cops and, instead of self-pity, bitterness and negation. However, these are good displays, often non-verbal, of the way two people momentarily connect, and fiercely imagined flashes of grace where they reveal themselves.

Harrowing and monotone, the play nevertheless yields unusually chewy hunks of meat for its actors to fall upon, and Adam Kotz as a scarred catatonic, Kevin McMonagle as his sadistic lover and Eamon Boland as a frightened Irish fantasist act from the gut. Patti Love, as the alchie not yet 40, who has nearly lost the use of her legs but not the capacity to see herself as she is, produces one of the most remarkable performances I've seen — utterly generous, infused with an odd detached humour, and unspeakably sad.

In a terrific week for being taken to the edge, Joseph Chaikin, the great American man of New York avant-garde theatre, chose to reveal himself

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onstage as the victim, mending now, of the stroke which rendered him aphasiac. His reading, with its strange rhythms and pronunciations, of **The War in Heaven**, a beautiful theatre-poem or non-life written with Sam Shepard, went quite beyond the small self that wondered and endured and fought back and even made a joke. It became a metaphor, like those of Beckett and *Tattoo*, for all our daily helpless 'living'. □

MUSIC

Carried away

Simon Reynolds

MY CURRENT FIX is a disparate clutch of 'weird' female voices that have emerged over the last 18 months. The principal *voix mystères* are Kristin Hersh (Throwing Muses), Mimi Goese (Hugo Largo) and Bjork (The Sugarcubes), but there's also Natalie Merchant of 10,000 Maniacs, Victoria Williams, Syd Straw of The Golden Palominos . . .

I lump these unique voices together not because they're homogeneously ethereal, but because they go against the general grain of pop in similar ways. Where the dominant voice of global pop is a soulful blast of healthy passion, les *voix mystères* eschew R&B's internal combustion in favour of a folk-derived *levitation*. Where the pop soul voice is warm, tactile, these voices chill, remain just out of reach. Where the pop soul voice strives to communicate every last nuance of feeling with painful clarity, these voices perplex, gesture towards an unfathomable otherness, at times approach the state of speaking in tongues.

Some would argue that this vision of Girl as Enigma is just one more male stereotype, in which women are framed by another kind of fascinated and voyeuristic gaze, as confining as conventional pop imagery of women (either need-a-man sassy, or mawkishly jilted). I'd disagree, pointing to the high proportion of female fans in these groups' audiences, and to female friends who've testified that Kristin Hersh, for example, speaks to them in a uniquely female voice, which has few precedents (the glacial self-sufficiency of Siouxsie, Patti Smith's delinquency, Kate Bush's artistic autonomy). These new female artists are using the otherwordly as a unique space for self-expression, in the process plugging into the desire for strangeness of bright girls in suburbia the world over. (Irretrievably suburban, I'll always hold that wanting to be strange is a step up from the desire to be normal, which most pop reflects.)

Women are once more beginning to sing of feelings of being fucked up or of exultation, that aren't centred around a man, but stem from being alive, from general confusion. It may not be long before a woman becomes an emblem for non-gender-specific alienation, a seer figure like Morrissey, Ian Curtis, with the *neutrality* to speak on behalf of everybody. Compare this with the 'strength' of pop females like Annie Lennox who have to speak *for* women, and whose testaments of female self-realisation only set up new ideals of omnicompetence for women to live up to. Someone like Kristin Hersh, on the other hand, is recovering for women the right to be as untogether and unmotivated as the rest of us.

These singers have a common base in folk, but theirs is a kind of displaced, up-rooted folk, aerial not earthy. Still the most exquisitely forlorn of these ghost-folk voices belongs to Kristin Hersh of **Throwing Muses**. Their new mini-LP *The Fat Skier* (4AD) seems less thunderously driven than their previous work: happy motherhood for Kristin has dissipated the cloud of dread that used to hang over their music. But tracks like 'A Feeling' — stranded langour, an exquisite lattice of eerie harmonies from Tanya Donelly, and the most torn-inside cry from Hersh — continue to defeat me. Not least as regards what the feeling being expressed *is* precisely: as ever the lyrics — a mixture of oblique insights and opaque dream imagery — are no help.

The Sugarcubes were recently an unknown Icelandic group. Now music papers are jostling to have them on their covers and 'Happy Birthday' (One Little Indian) is Number Two in the independent chart. Over the baleful sensuality of a barely classifiable backdrop swoons the bursting, capricious voice of Bjork, with a series of snapshot glimpses into an obsessive affair. A record of debilitating beauty.

From the throat of Mimi Goese of **Hugo Largo** comes a spellbinding, spellbound sound. Hugo Largo began as a reaction to the NY school of industrial noise/horror imagery bands, a retreat to quietness and an aesthetic concerned more with a sense of the sacred than with desecration. An odd line up (no drums, two basses, treated strings) produces music that unwinds slowly but inexorably, above which are draped the slow-motion, free-fall acrobatics of Mimi's voice. *Drum* (Relativity US import) leaves me floundering in paradoxes — huge, imposing gentleness? a thunderous hush? The titles — 'Grow Wild', 'Fancy', 'Eureka', 'Second Skin' — suggest that claustrophobic New York has driven Hugo Largo in search of space.

Mimi Goese is astonishingly self-deprecating about her voice: 'anyone can sing, can't they?' The idea that anyone can do it, that *attitude* is all you need, is a legacy of punk, and part of an edifice of post-punk critical thought that needs to be dismantled. We're going to have to rediscover and celebrate with worship the notion of the Gift — the belief that some people have been given, arbitrarily, a mysterious quality of voice, or a capacity to have visions, and these things come to them with ease, where we would have to work to counterfeit inspiration. They're blessed and cursed with a power over us; their voices charge up words that might otherwise be gauche, or self-indulgent, or plain unremarkable. And we're *made* to listen. Awestruck, these voices strike awe. □

MUSIC

Nu world

Charles Fox

Don Cherry's Nu *Queen Elizabeth Hall*

HAD SOMEBODY thought of the notion earlier we might all be licking postage stamps bearing the likenesses of Satchmo, Duke and Bird. For October has been designated National Jazz Month, an attempt at gingering up the British jazz scene by putting on special events as well as drawing attention to music-making that goes on all the time. Naturally, and very properly, local musicians are to the fore. But National Jazz Month also coincides with a tour on the Arts Council's Contemporary Music Network by one of the more remarkable and exciting American ensembles.

Listening to Don Cherry's Nu surrounded by a capacity audience at the QEH is a convincing demonstration of how what was avant-garde a quarter of a century ago has since become widely acceptable. For Cherry continues to play his pocket trumpet very much the way he did as a member of the quartet that Ornette Coleman took into New York's Five Spot club in the autumn of 1959. John Coltrane had just left Miles Davis and was on the verge of expanding and formalising his modal innovations, methods that seemed loose but required every note to be accountable. Established musicians would be taken aback by Coltrane's apparent prolixity, but were even more alarmed by the way Coleman and Cherry seemed to jettison harmony altogether.

That assumption was, like most reactions to new happenings in the arts, an over-simplification. But the way Coleman and Cherry put the emphasis on melody and rhythm seemed especially shocking to a generation for whom clambering through the chord changes was often the supreme test of an improviser's skill. Cherry had in fact been a hard-bop trumpeter, adept at that particular kind of manoeuvring, when he met Coleman in Los Angeles halfway through the 1950s. Dexterity of that sort still surfaces in his playing. Harmony, however, tends, just as it did in Coleman's Quartet, to be the outcome of the musicians' activity rather than its starting point. What should never be forgotten is that both Coleman and Cherry once worked in rhythm-and-blues bands, limited in scope, maybe, but about as traditional as it was possible to be in black music during the '50s. Blues and blues harmonies always loomed in their background.

Dwelling on these early adventurings is not as irrelevant as impatient readers may imagine. Nu would even have included another of Coleman's key sidemen, the drummer Ed Blackwell, had illness not prevented him from joining the group at the start of the tour. As it was, the concert's first half contained a couple of Ornette Coleman tunes, 'Chopin Chopeen' and 'Traffic', Cherry's solo in the latter adopting the fragmented manner — *pointilliste* is probably the correct adjective — of his days with Coleman, yet succeeded by alto saxophone playing from Carlos Ward, using lines which stretched out handsomely, indebted as much to Benny Carter, one felt, as to Ornette. But Ward, a regular member of Ekaya, the group led by the South African pianist-composer Abdullah Ibrahim, can be a fiery soloist too.

The presence in the group of Mark Helias underlined the fact, rarely commented upon, that otherwise all-black avant-garde groups of the '60s, commencing with Ornette Coleman's but also including Albert Ayler's, nearly all used white bass players. The contribution made to jazz of that era by the European classical string tradition is a subject worth exploring. Helias even composed a

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couple of the pieces, 'Limbo' and — slow, processional, not all that far from a New Orleans dirge — 'Pitchfield Blues'.

Ed Blackwell's absence meant that Nana Vasconcelos had to spend more time behind a jazz drum kit — coping admirably too — than adding colour and a special kind of extravagance with his own assortment of percussion. There was, for once, no virtuoso slapping of chest and thighs and legs, but Vasconcelos's mastery of the berimbau — visually paradoxical, an instrument that pre-war surrealists would have doted upon — stopped the show as usual. Cherry stuck to his pocket trumpet for most of the time but in 'Bird Boy' he turned to the douss'n gouni, a sort of African guitar but with strings at different angles. Just as Esperanto holds out little promise of worthwhile literature, so the idea of an international musical idiom has always seemed unrealistic, even naive. Yet in the trio Codona, which contained Vasconcelos as well as the late Colin Walcott, Cherry once got close to achieving it. He does so again in several of the pieces in Nu's repertoire.

At Brighton on the night after the QEH concert the programme turned out to be exactly the same (except for the encore), with each half framed by Carlos Ward's tune 'Lito'. Which means that the pieces mentioned in this review will probably be heard by those readers who catch the remaining dates of Cherry's tour: Warwick University (15 October), when Ed Blackwell is expected to rejoin the group; Durham (16), Newcastle (17), Leicester (18), Southampton (20), Aberdeen (21), Dundee (22), Edinburgh (23) and Glasgow (24).

Another fine ensemble currently perambulating around Britain is a quartet led by the Canadian-born pianist Paul Bley (he once worked with Ornette too) and including John Surman, the guitarist Bill Frisell and Paul Motian on drums; they can still be caught in Manchester (this Thursday), Llantwit Major (Friday), Liverpool (Saturday) and Dartington Hall (Sunday). And if you can only celebrate National Jazz Month by switching on the radio, try Sonny Rollins' Croydon concert (heavily praised in these pages last year) this Friday on Radio 3, and Ekaya — with Carlos Ward — a week later. □

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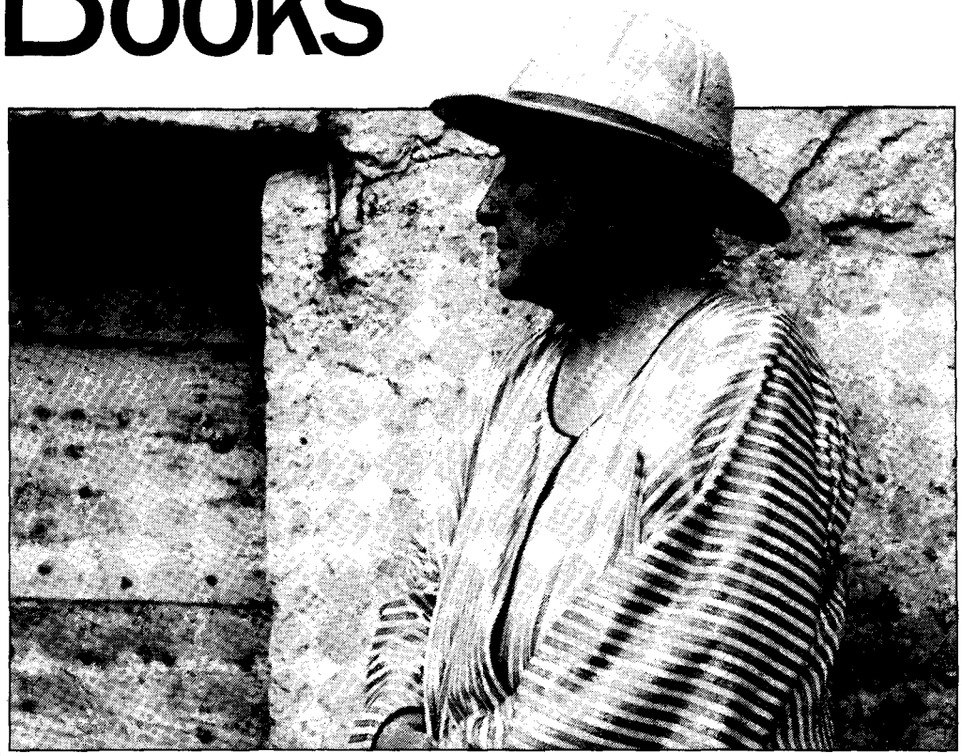

Camera Press

Freed by dependence on Alice: Gertrude Stein by Cecil Beaton

LITERATURE

The Modern woman

Melissa Benn

Writing for Their Lives
GILLIAN HANSCOMBE and VIRGINIA L. SMYERS
Women's Press £6.95

THE TEXT-BOOK TRUTH about Modernism — a tight name for the loose movement that, in literature, ruptured poetic and narrative traditions at the start of the century — is that it was created primarily by men. Men like James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Virginia Woolf is the only woman of that time to be considered really 'famous'. This book, however, unfolds a network of more or less neglected women within Modernism: women like Dorothy Richardson, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Djuna Barnes, Gertrude Stein, Bryher, Mina Loy, Marianne Moore and Amy Lowell. These writers, poets, publishers and editors — the last two often, if not mostly, of one anothers' work — lived and worked in the period between the 1890s and WWII. Many were expatriates; many were poor.

The book is, too, about their interconnections — the bewildering complex of love affairs, intense friendships and sponsorship that they shared and that provided material for their work, particularly the novels. Much of the break with conventional literature was about precisely this use of autobiography, and the deployment of an intense subjectivity in its telling.

Two seemingly contradictory aspects of the relation between these women and their time serve to emphasise the parallels between women writing now and then. First, because Modernism appears to have been a movement more separate from than joined to the massive social changes, politics and wars of its time, the women could almost be living now. Like many of today's writers, the true revolution for them was the one that they were making in language, in form and — for the women — in ideas of sexual identity. Second, the early 1900s were — like now — a time of restive feminism. And Modernist women, like so many cultural feminists in the 1980s, were more concerned with identity than with social politics, with trying to combat the distortions of femininity in the head rather than deal with more concrete inequalities out in the world.

The only way that these women could do what they wanted in their work was to find some way of avoiding the conventional fate of their sex: marriage and children. Often, that involved loving each other. Getrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, H.D. and Bryher, Amy Lowell and Ada Russell had loving and life-long relationships. There were also several more stormy, short-term associations, such as the affair between the journalist Djuna

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Barnes and Thelma Wood (which left both women feeling damaged for life). But, as the authors argue, it wasn't the choice of a different sexuality that, of itself, ensured freedom; it was the finding of someone who would give love and support, steadily. In other words for women (like men) the condition of true independence is the discovery of someone on whom to be dependent. A dependence that frees — and that could be domestic, emotional or, in some cases, as with Bryher and H.D., economic as well. Virginia Woolf found it with a mild and supportive man; others, like Dorothy Richardson, weaved in and out of heterosexuality, making use of men and women as it suited them.

I didn't know, reading this book, whether or not to get irritated by its general romanticism about that special being, the 'woman writer', and her necessary selfishness — or, at least, the detachment from the cares and concerns of others that she must develop in order to be as good as any selfish man. But, in the end, I decided that it didn't irritate me, particularly when I came to the bit about Ezra Pound throwing tantrums because his long, autocratic reign over the Imagist poets and their output was coming to an end. He couldn't stand to be usurped by youth, by new talent, by disagreement. What I decided was that this 'story' of Modernist women is a paradigm of one — the worst — kind of relationship between Sister and Brother: where Brother gets all the encouragement and love; gets to go to school, or the better school; throws blue-faced tantrums but can always rely on someone for food or proof-reading. Meanwhile, Sister works hard and tries to be good for as long as she possibly can, until she's fit to burst — then, when she gives up/rebels and decides to be herself, she becomes something magnificent. And there's no going back, not for her. It's just so depressing that Brother gets remembered and Sister doesn't; which is why romanticism between, and about, women should always be encouraged.

A Women's History of SEX

HARRIETT GILBERT & CHRISTINE ROCHE

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SEXUAL POLITICS

For ourselves

Roz Kaveney

Body Shock
LIZ HODGKINSON *Columbus* £5.95

GOOD INTENTIONS are not enough. Liz Hodgkinson's account of transexuality is soaked with a liberal condecension that sets the teeth a-tingle. There was a time when the cutting edge of social progress was nice, het, middle-class whites writing well-intentioned articles about the twilit world of whatever minority happened to be in that week. Those days ought to be long gone: this particular member of the transexual minority hereby serves notice of intent to sink my teeth into the flesh of any hand that tries to feed me this particular kind of patronising pap.

Hodgkinson is concerned, I am sure deeply concerned, that sexual minorities not be subjected to overt oppression or discrimination; she is also blissfully unaware that to spend as much time as she does discussing *why* individuals are gay, lesbian or transexual is almost as oppressive as throwing halfbricks at them in the street. It involves the assumption that she is entitled to an explanation of why we choose to be difficult, perverse and not like her. Because she is a member of the majority sexuality, she believes herself to be privileged to discuss whether my sexual choices indicate that I am mad, to indulge in pseudo-scientific reductionism about whether pre-natal hormone fluctuations or over-attentive nurture are the particular way in which blame can be attached to my mother. That which unites the skinhead and the liberal in what one has, for want a better single word, to call heterosexism, is their belief that they are entitled to force me to pay attention to their opinion of my sexual choices.

All of this is particularly regrettable from someone who was subjected to some unpleasant abuse for her book about *her* choice: celibacy. But the point about Hodgkinson's attitude to sexual choice is that choices have, for her, to be absolutely right or wrong. In the earlier book, she massively overstated the medical case that sex can be bad for you; here she states, bizarrely, that the clitoris has no biological function. Sexual pleasure is not important to Hodgkinson and is, by fiat, excluded from biology. She is perhaps not best equipped to understand choices that have a lot to do with sexual pleasure and how it is experienced. Significantly, in Hodgkinson's otherwise exhaustive account of surgical procedures and extensive interviews with post-operative transexuals, she fails to mention that for many of us sex starts being fun, that the gamble pays off. She particularly fails to make this point when discussing those of us who, having been gay or bisexual men, come out post-operatively as lesbian-identified; this choice is supposed to have nothing to do with pleasure and everything to do with teeth-gritting ideology.

She does notch up a few Brownie points by the space she devotes to female-to-male transexuals. I am not entitled to comment with what success or sensitivity, merely to record that she does.

For much of the text, she regards herself as influenced by the ideas of Janice Raymond, whose book *The Transexual Empire* is here, as elsewhere, praised for taking discussion of the issue away from the medical profession — which is like saying that publication of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* took discussion of Jews away from the Spanish Inquisition. She portrays Raymond as a sweet-tempered liberal like herself, albeit one concerned that transexuals stand in the way of some utopian androgynous future. To call Mary Daly's favourite disciple a prophet of androgyny is like calling the Mafia a Co-operative Society. *The Transexual Empire* was a strategic action on behalf of the biological-determinist, puritan wing of the American Women's Movement, aimed, with all its rhetoric about the metaphysical rape of the movement by transexual feminists, at arrogating the right to name who were, and who were not, proper women — a right used thereafter not only against transexuals but hetero-sexual feminists and lesbians who polluted sisterhood with fearful sins like sadomasochism, fantasy or impure lust. It is hard to know whether Hodgkinson is criminally disingenuous, or so politically naive that she is not safe on the street.

She is influenced by Raymond — and by the admirable Rachel Webb, a Labour councillor out as transexual — to advocate that transexuals of both directions be overt about their identity, rather than trying to hide in the shadows of a sexist society. She is right to do so, though she is not entitled from the safety of Richmond to criticise the choices people make on a council estate in Middlesborough — and her utopian final paragraphs about breaking down sexual barriers are the sort of claptrap that fights to the last drop of someone else's blood. Only by refusing labels as anything more than a convenient shorthand for choices about pleasure, plumbing and whose side we choose to be on, will transexuals be seen as autonomous individuals, whose rights derive from our capacity to *demand* them, not from the grace and favour of doctors, social workers and the likes of Liz Hodgkinson.

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CRIME

Quick and dead

Nick Kimberley

IN 1932, Dashiell Hammett had already published most of his novels (only *The Thin Man* was yet to come, in 1934). Raymond Chandler, on the other hand, was just setting out: his first short story appeared in 1933, in *Black Mask*, the magazine which had published most of Hammett's work. In Hollywood, the great cycle of gangster movies which dominated the '30s was getting underway: *Little Caesar* was released in 1930, *The Public Enemy* in 1931. The landscape of American fiction was changing, and those changes were most keenly felt in crime fiction — compare this with Britain, where Agatha Christie had begun writing in 1920. The landscape of *her* fiction, and of much British crime writing, would remain virtually unchanged well into the 1960s.

Black Mask was central to these developments in America; with a quarter of a million readers every month, it created a huge market for fast-paced thrillers — usually short stories, but the magazine often serialised full-length novels, including Hammett's. In 1932, it published chapters from a novel by a new writer, Paul Cain, who a year later published those sections as a novel, **Fast One**, the first title to appear in a new series called Vintage Crime (No Exit Press, £9.95 & £3.95). It's rumoured that Cain wrote this on a bet, but there's no lack of commitment in the writing. The pace throughout is furious, the sentences short. The longest utterance in the book comes from its central character, Kells, who expresses his taste for gambling rather than a life of violence: 'It's a lot more fun guessing the name of a pony than guessing what the name of the next stranger I'm supposed to have shot will be.'

That's as may be, but Kells spends most of the novel far from the seedy pleasures of the race-track, shooting and being shot at like there's no tomorrow — which, finally, there isn't for him. The novel is crowded with characters, mostly men but including a woman in love with Kells, who rolls her own cigarettes — independence indeed in the '30s. The plot is both minimal and tangled: Kells finds himself caught between two sides slugging it out in a Los Angeles gang war, and passes his time trying to fleece both sides with little regard for the community good. Drugs, gambling, political frame-ups, murder are all here in abundance; it's often difficult to remember who's on whose side.

For most of its brief length, *Fast One* is cheerfully bibulous and careless of death; but it ends in despair as Kells dies close to, but not within touching distance of, the woman who loves him — who's equally dead. There's a bracing cynicism here, which Kells himself expresses earlier in the novel in the simplest possible way. Seeing someone gunned down in front of him, his only response is, 'Well . . .' Readers used to the artfulness of Hammett and Chandler might find Cain's brutality (both philosophical and stylistic) hard to take. But this, his only novel, is no small achievement in terms of vernacular writing, compression and even wit.

Its companion in the Vintage Crime series, Jonathan Latimer's **The Dead Don't Care** (No Exit, £9.95 & £3.95, first published in 1938), is less impressive. Latimer continually made the mistake of not taking his fiction seriously. His tough guys are in it for a lark and a drink; their little jokes conceal a schoolboy decency (like Philip Marlowe's) quite different from anything in Cain's novel. The plot concerns kidnap and ransom in a wealthy Florida family; Crane and O'Malley, the two indie detectives called in to sort things out, are content to enjoy the sunsplashed opulence in an unquestioning way that wasn't acceptable to most tough-guy novelists. When the crime is solved, Crane calls all the suspects together to run through it with them — a hackneyed device Latimer would make good use of later in his career when he was writing scripts for the *Perry Mason* TV series.

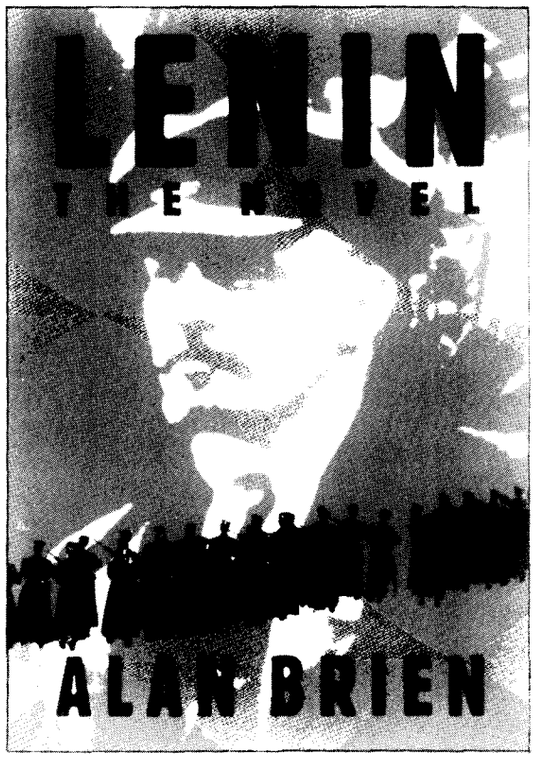
There are moments to enjoy: when Crane wakes in bed next to a dead woman, his first thoughts are for his wallet and the possibilities of flight, a nicely caddish touch. Crane also reads *Black Mask*, but it's difficult to know whether Latimer intends that as a sign of taste or dissolution. The quantities of booze consumed here leave even *Fast One* looking temperate; but Latimer wasn't the best '30s crime novelist, and this isn't *his* best: his racism and obsessive interest in cleavage make it unpalatable. Still, a certain amount of such things has to be tolerated if we're to read crime fiction that's half a century old. This new series of reprints reminds us of the pleasures and pitfalls to be found in the thriller's past.

Lawrence Sanders' **The Timothy Files** (NEL, £10.95) attempts to be wholly modern, but nods to the past with its use throughout of the present tense. Timothy Cone works for a team of Wall Street investigators, which gives Sanders the chance to touch some contemporary paranoias: high finance, privatised artificial insemination, corrupt art dealers.

There's a wry sense of the disreputability of it all, but Sanders is less convincing in his attempts to make Cone a modern tough guy, a misanthropic loner. He may say things like, 'I'm just an ex-grunt who's eaten enough dirt to last me a lifetime' but at bottom he's got a heart of gold — he never forgets to feed his cat; and if he finds it difficult to relate to people, he certainly knows how to fuck. The contradictory characteristics eventually render him featureless.

There's a different confusion of messages in Stuart Woods' **Under the Lake** (Heinemann, £10.95); here the confusion is generic. Are we reading a horror novel, or a mystery built around small-town corruption? Woods probably wants to tap both markets, but his novel is trapped between two incompatible worlds: bringing mystic experiences from beyond the grave into crime fiction is simply confusing. The thriller needs its feet firmly planted in this world if it's to mean anything; the past can haunt the present only in the characters' minds. For all their faults, Paul Cain and Jonathan Latimer knew that, 50 years ago. Without being simply realist, their novels realised that good, and especially evil, are of our own making. Once Evil becomes a free-floating entity from Beyond, the point of crime fiction disappears.

THE REVOLUTIONARY NOVEL



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INTERVIEW

Holy war in the tenth arrondissement

Edmund White with Juan Goytisolo

The Arabs are taking over! And so — in a new novel by Juan Goytisolo — are the Turks, the Africans, the Vietnamese, a hundred revolutionary sects, sexual liberationists, Donald Duck and McDonalds. Paris is the battleground, language the weapon. American author Edmund White talks to Spain's leading novelist, whose words are mightier than Le Pen

Catherine Denvir

JUAN GOYTISOLO is a lean, intense man without much manner, although with manners the French, at least, would consider admirably 'correct'. On the occasion of the first publication ever in Britain of one of his books, *Landscapes After the Battle*, he received me in his study. Like the room of the narrator in the novel, it looks out on the seemingly 'edible' roof of the Paris Opéra. And, like the narrator's, his neighbourhood has the feeling of a *souk* — a mixture of cultures, races, languages and trades completely different from the Paris of historic monuments, chic shops and restored townhouses.

Landscapes After the Battle is a short, exhilarating tour of contemporary themes — the emergence of pop culture, sexual liberation and ethnic militancy. These political issues are juxtaposed in a bright, disturbing collage (a textual 'miscegenation') with the narrator's eccentricities — his lusting after little girls (an appetite explicitly linked to Lewis Carroll's), his strangely formal relationship with his wife (who lives in an adjoining apartment and with whom he communicates through letters) and his random sorties through this heterogeneous neighbourhood, Le Sentier. 'The Battle' of the title seemed to me to be the narrator's own compromised dignity, or the death of leftist ideology in France, or the (well) lost war against Arab immigration.

Goytisolo's work is much admired in France, where he has lived since 1957, and in Spain, where he is considered the greatest living avant-garde novelist (Carlos Fuentes has gone even farther in calling him, quite simply, the 'greatest living Spanish novelist'). In the United States three of his other novels have already been published — *Makbara*, *Count Julian* and *Juan the Landless*. At the moment Goytisolo is working on a long autobiography — two volumes have already appeared in Spanish.

Edmund White: In the first volume of your autobiography you mention your adolescent fascination with France when you were growing up in Barcelona. Now that you've lived in Paris so many years, what do you think of contemporary French culture?

Juan Goytisolo: What interests me most about Paris now is its 'babelisation' — the surfeit of cultures and languages one finds here. I've lived in Paris 30 years, with long stays in the United States and North Africa (I was a visiting professor in New York for three years). One learns in New York and Paris to live out cultural relativity, which for me is the very sign of modernity. In France I've met writers from all over the world — Spanish, American, Arabic, Turkish.

My stay in France has allowed me to see my own

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language in the light of another and to view my own culture from a useful distance.

EW: Although you've been publishing fiction and essays since 1957, your style became markedly more complex, vivid and original starting in 1971 with *Count Julian*. What led to this breakthrough?
JG: I feel that one does not choose one's language but is chosen by it. That became clear to me in France, where I started to read classics in Castilian that I'd never read (or read badly) in Spain. For an exiled writer his language becomes less a means of communication and more a tool for his work — his language is his authentic homeland. I constructed my language here in France in a way far more complex than if I'd stayed in Spain. If one never leaves home, one's language remains a given, whereas for me Castilian cannot be taken for granted. Certain Spanish critics think I write in a 'bizarre' manner — and that I take for high praise. All the Spanish writers I admire were initially considered bizarre.

My greatest influence is Juan Ruiz, the mediaeval arch-priest of Hita who wrote *The Book of Good Love* in the 14th century. This is a book full of Arab eroticism, a daring work of cultural symbiosis (somewhat like that of Rabelais) — a combination of Jewish, Arab and Christian culture. It's the most modernist text I know of, constructed in a completely free way. It is the high point of Mudejar culture. [The Mudejars were Muslims permitted to stay in Spain after the Christian reconquest.] Ruiz takes words from every language — Latin words, Jewish words, Arabic words. And he goes directly from a daring passage about sexuality into a prayer to the Virgin.

Then there is *La Celestina*, which influenced *Count Julian*. Then there are the poets San Juan de la Cruz and Góngora and Cervantes — my biggest influences. As for the 16th-century poet Quevedo, I feel both a fascination and a horror for a man whose language was splendid and whose politics were the most reactionary imaginable. After all he denounced Góngora, accusing him of being a Jew and a homosexual.

After Quevedo in the 17th century there were no possibilities for renewing Spanish — until this century. Although Cervantes had an enormous influence on the novel throughout the world, the only country that wasn't affected by *Don Quixote* was Spain. After the Spanish heyday of the three cultures — Christian, Jewish and Muslim — Spain went dead. No Spanish-speaking writer took advantage of Cervantes' freedom of language and construction until Borges. After Borges other writers embraced that freedom — Carlos Fuentes, Cabrera Infante, myself.

Góngora is a similar case. He had no descendants in Spanish until this century, the *Paradiso* of Lezama Lima, the Cuban novelist — our James Joyce. My own novel, *Count Julian*, is a homage to Góngora, just as my *Makbara* is virtually a dialogue with Juan Ruiz.

Or take Saint John of the Cross [San Juan de la Cruz] — a unique poet in Spanish. His poetry awakens no echo in Spain until this century — the work of José Angel Valente, the poet of my generation whom I most admire.

EW: How would you evaluate Spanish culture today? Are there any writers we should be searching out?

JG: After a civil war the process of recovery is very slow. When Franco came into power all the best writers and thinkers left the country and the young people who were growing up then had to educate themselves — necessarily a partial process. Right now Spain is culturally very active. Only time will reveal who are those three or four writers (there are never more) who maintain the dignity of any given culture.

EW: What effect did knowing Jean Genet for so many years have on your work?
JG: Genet taught me to replace the vanity of my youth with a true pride as an artist. Genet himself was the least vain and the proudest man I've ever known — proud with regard to his work. He was a determining influence on my idea of how a writer should lead his life.

EW: In your memoirs you make some startling revelations — such as your homosexual experiences with your grandfather.
JG: Yes, the first volume is at once totally new and anachronistic. This kind of book, which is not a confession but an examination of conscience, has long been familiar in Protestant countries. But in Spain it's created a *succés de scandale*, because until now Spanish memoirs have been either conveniently forgetful of awkward moments (such as a long collaboration with Franco) or mere gossip or flashily exhibitionistic (Salvador Dali).

EW: I gather that for you the Christian reconquest of Spain was a cultural defeat for Spain.
JG: It's more complicated than that. At the time there was no Spain, of course, and Europe had long been cut off from classical culture (think of the contribution of Avicenna and Averroës, two Muslim philosophers, to our understanding of Aristotle and Plato). Or one could mention all the Muslim influences on the *Divine Comedy* (the description of heaven and purgatory, the nocturnal trip of the Prophet and so on). In Spain the crusades are an echo of the Islamic *jihad*, our rosary is the Islamic rosary, the religious confraternities you see today in Andalusia were based in Muslim religious societies, even the pilgrimages to holy shrines — it's all a replica of Muslim culture, although unsuspected.

EW: In *Landscapes After the Battle* you seem to prefer the big, anonymous city to the countryside.
JG: This novel is also a theory of the city. In my neighbourhood, one learns to respect other people in their differences. Ideology, as the book suggests, is in ruins, and I think that's a good thing, since there is no single ideological system that could account for the complexity of the world. If my novel is in fragments, it's because I choose to read the city as a broken text, just as my fragmented text is meant to be read as an emblem of the city.

But if, on the one hand, Paris is witnessing the breakdown of political ideology, on the other it is also observing the vengeance of the individual. Each ethnic minority is insisting on its own identity, and that's the reason I parody a minority that is seeking vengeance for a crime committed against it 800 years ago. The ruin of ideology has led to this rampant individualism.

EW: But do you distrust or welcome this breakdown and the corresponding emergence of splintered minorities? ▷

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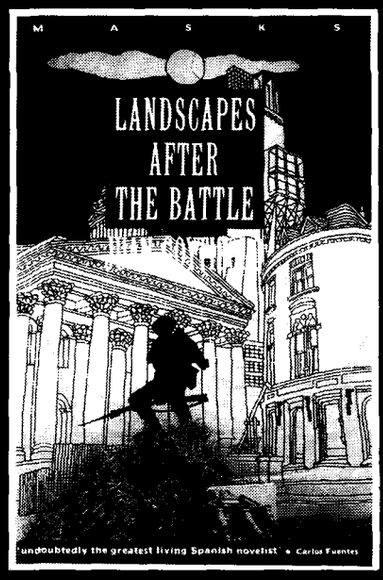

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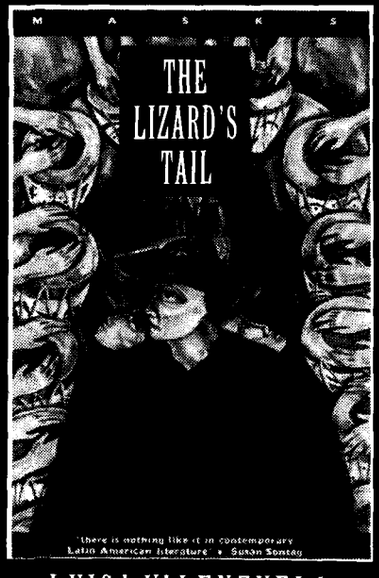

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JG: I welcome it with a sense of humour. Although the book can be read as apocalyptic, I mean it to be an affectionate portait of Paris. There's a phrase I admire very much in Walter Benjamin. He says that to lose oneself in a city as one might get lost in a forest requires extensive training. My main character has this training — he can look at the city as a forest. When you wander round this neighbourhood, if you can't read Turkish or Arabic you end up by understanding none of the grafitti. That's why at the beginning of the book I imagine all the street signs are one day rewritten in Arabic. For instance, just downstairs there's an Arabic inscription on the wall: 'Frenchmen, you're dirty racists!' It's never been erased, because the French can't read it. That's why I've started studying Turkish with a small class of neighbours just next door. And I've been studying Arabic for several years now.

As I re-entered the bazaar-like atmosphere of Le Sentier, I thought that Juan Goytisolo is the perfect modern counterpart to Baudelaire's *flâneur*; Goytisolo knows not only how to get lost in the big city but also how to track the spoors left by even the most exotic of its creatures. □

Landscapes After the Battle *is published this week by Serpent's Tail at £7.95. Today (15 October) Juan Goytisolo is 'In Conversation' with Martin Seymour-Smith at the ICA at 1pm.*

Edmund White's novels Boy's Own Story *and* Caricole *are published by Picador.*

FICTION

Double, double

Sabine Durrant

The Sadness of Witches
JANICE ELLIOTT *Hodder* £10.95

RECENT FEMINISTS, looking on the legends and rituals of witchcraft as a part of women's spiritual heritage, have found in the witch an image of female strength. Like 'virago' the word 'witch' has become the symbol of a powerful identity untramelled by convention: witness such American political groups as Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell and the Women Incensed by Telephone Company Harassment.

In *The Sadness of Witches*, a haunting and beautifully constructed novel, Janice Elliott gives us a tantalising, ambiguous picture of the 'witch that is in every woman'. On the one hand, the title, plot and structure assume that witches are damned and destructive, 'shut out from the warm rooms of life'. On the other hand, the strong subliminal metaphor of the sea and its association with unconventional women tug against simplistic attitudes towards good and evil.

The arrival of two innocents, Molly and Walter Waterman, at a coastguard's cottage on the Cornish coast creates a stir in the local community: 'Across the river in windows seemingly blind, binoculars were raised.' Polture and Poltreth are 'a widow's land', dominated by women. There is a gaggle of undifferentiated village girls, Sally, Selina and Sandra; there is Norah Carteret, mopping saliva from the weak chin of her prematurely senile husband, and there is the strange writer Martha Price with the long grey hair, living alone with her black cat. As the novel progresses, the women are drawn together and, as Martha begins to cast a deadly fascination over the newcomers, the atmosphere becomes charged with dangerous emotions and imminent catastrophe.

The three parts of the novel — named after the early pagan festivals Beltrane, Solstice and All Hallows — move from awakening, through chaos, to final calm. This carefully structured movement is emphasised by Elliott's use of imagery and language. A rather irritating, stylised stream of consciousness in the early parts of the book breaks down in the central sections as the narrator, like the witch's spell, forges links between seemingly disparate events and dissolves the privacy of thought. The language loses its whimsicalness and shocks — Norah Carteret 'took off her pearls and her dress and her flesh and her bones'. Sight, and the image of light, thread through the novel with conventional associations of clarity and safety (Walter casts himself and family into danger when he walks away from 'the room, the light, the warmth, the house'; Martha has neither shadow nor reflection). The serpent, which appears in the guise of a serpentine necklace, a pregnant snake and smoked eel, is an obvious symbol of hatching evil.

But, on all levels, it's the image of the sea that dominates the novel. It is by boat that Walter, the 'Landlocked Aquarius', meets Martha; it is in the Ocean Suite of the Channel Hotel that the fading wizard Midwinter lies decaying. The sea fascinates and frightens Molly, who discerns 'a kind of muscular movement beneath the stretched surface, a pull in various contradictory directions'. Water carries the ambiguities of the novel and, in its association with women (in particular with menstrual blood: 'great red seas to drown small forked men'), it becomes a symbol of female potential.

The fairy-tale happy ending is a deliberate anti-climax. The 'feminine' virtue of self-sacrifice has been excercised, the sea has calmed, sorcery is rejected and normality restored. Martha is no longer wild and wonderful, but is seen submissive and sweetly smiling. 'She had taken a lover in the normal fashion and launched, with Judith's permission, her own range of home-made face creams.' The prose records not triumph, but loss. 'Her grey aura had left her entirely along with so much else.' In place of passion and power we're left with the sickly smell of domesticity, of 'cucumber and primrose, honey and apricot'. □

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HISTORY

Trad revolutionaries

William Lamont

Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c1590-1640
NICHOLAS TYACKE *Oxford* £30

A GREAT TRUISM of early modern history is that Calvinism is a creed for rebels. A vivid memory from my undergraduate days is of Sir John Neale drawing on contemporary fears of an international Marxist take-over in order to reinforce his picture of Calvinism as a destabilising ideology. Since I headed my lecture notes at the time 'J.E. We've seen-it-in-our-own-day Neale', I must have felt some nagging doubts, I suppose. But, from a quite different perspective, wasn't Tawney saying the same thing when he argued that Calvinism did for the bourgeoisie of the earlier period what Marxism did for the proletariat of the later period: namely, provide a discredited and rejected class with an ideology which placed it at the centre of a deterministically-ordained purpose? To see the English Civil War as the working out of an ideology of subversion made all sorts of sense.

Except, that is, when one came to study in any depth the *mentalité* of the men who actually began the Civil War. My own study of one such man, the fiercest Calvinist ideologue of his day, William Prynne, turned up the picture of a man loyal to Crown and Church, anxious to preserve the determinist traditions of Elizabeth I against the free-will doctrines of Arminian innovators, and a Puritan who identified *with* the Elizabethan Archbishop Whitgift and *against* his Presbyterian opponent Cartwright.

In a notable essay, first published in 1973, Nicholas Tyacke offered an interpretation of English Calvinism which made Prynne seem less idiosyncratic. Indeed, Tyacke argued that the *majority* of English Calvinists felt, like Prynne, threatened by a take-over of their Church by doctrinal opponents. The threat was not illusory. For Tyacke, the watershed was the end of James I's reign.

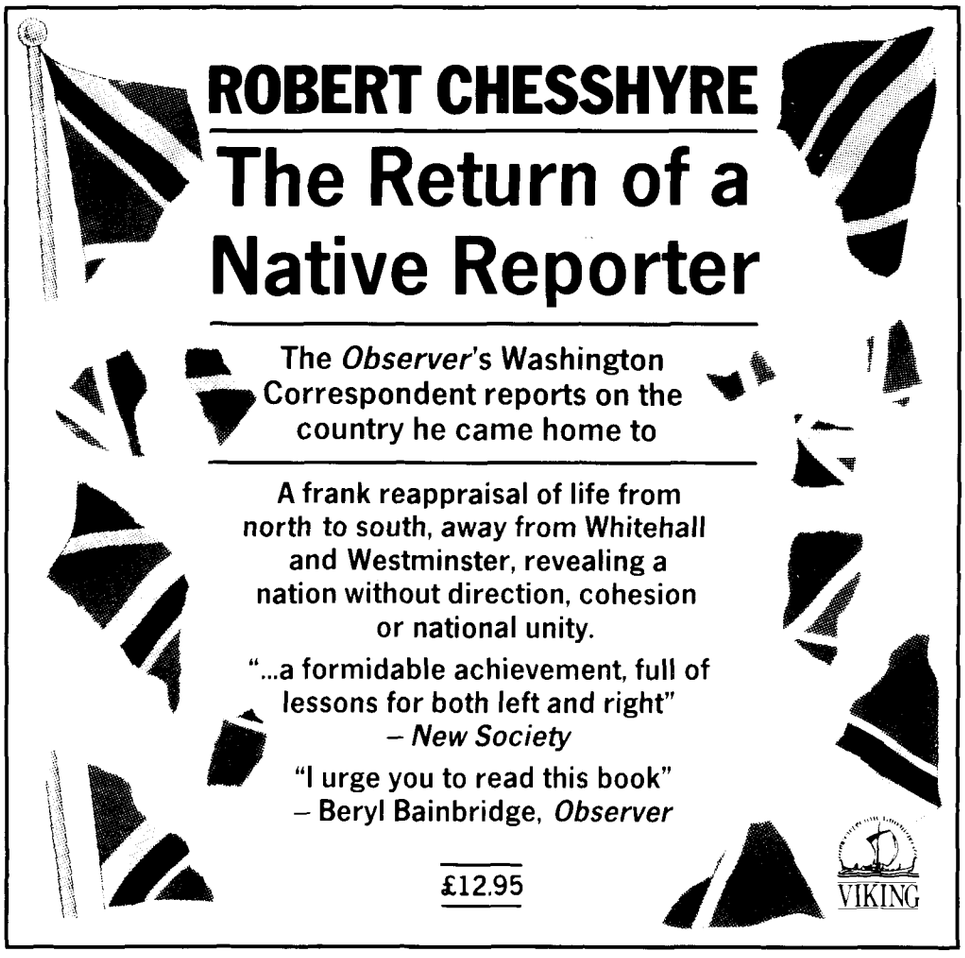
Until then Calvinism was dominant in the highest reaches of the established church. Thus James I could send English representatives to the international Calvinist gathering at Dort in 1619 to support the official condemnation of the threatening doctrines of the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (who had died in 1609). But move on in time to 1626 and we have a new team in charge — Charles I, the Duke of Buckingham and William Laud, the latter already promised the job of Archbishop of Canterbury — and, according to Tyacke, a new policy to promote those very Arminian doctrines, proscribed by all their predecessors since the Reformation. In his recent novel, *Roger's Version*, John Updike writes of the 'harmless hope that Man could do *some* good, could do *something* on his own to activate redeeming grace', but, to the Protestant mind of the 17th century, such hopes were anything but harmless. They smacked of Popery. And Arminianism was the Trojan Horse of the international Roman Catholic conspiracy. The Protestants who began the Civil War, on this thesis, were not Bakunin-type anarchists planning a revolution of the saints, but patriotic conservative gentlemen seeking a return to Elizabethan values.

Since 1973 this is a thesis which has had its critics, from both left and right. There is a tradition on the left which sees the Civil War as the outcome, among other things, of a Church/State conflict which had its roots in the preceding century. On this view Laud is a little worse than his predecessors, but not essentially different from them (not unlike A.J.P. Taylor's view of the role of Hitler in German history compared to Bethmann Hollweg and Bismarck). There is, equally, a revisionist thesis on the right, which would have Laud very little different from his predecessors (always excepting the 'Puritan' aberration Abbot). They emphasise the pluralist and ambiguous nature of the Church of England doctrinal tradition.

Neither criticism will carry muster now that the long-awaited study of the English Arminians by Tyacke has been published. Similarities between Laud and all his predecessors pale beside this the towering dissimilarity: Laud was the first anti-Calvinist ever to become Archbishop of Canterbury. Tyacke's scrupulously documented study shows how Calvinism, from being the orthodox doctrine of the Church of England, was outlawed by the activities of an ideologically motivated group of clergymen to become the mark of 'Puritan' subversion. Familiar historical understanding is thus turned on its head: the Arminians are now the innovators, the Calvinists the conservatives.

It says a lot for Tyacke's confidence that he can afford to leave the best joke about Arminianism to the last page of his book, but he has good reasons for doing so. Bishop Morley was asked what the Arminians held. He replied that 'they held all the best bishoprics and deaneries in England'. It is a very good joke, and a very English one. There is something healthily non-ideological about it; it chimes with the protestations of Laud and his controversial supporter, Montague, that they had never actually *read* Arminius. But this is precisely the case that *cannot* now be made in the light of Tyacke's careful researches into Continental influences, correspondence across the waters, the control of doctoral theses and the like. And it reminds us that the anecdote was not derived from some neutral source. It comes from Clarendon, and forms part of his argument that the rot set in for the Church of England with Abbot's indolence, not Laud's intemperance.

Tyacke's fine study prompts one final thought. Is it plausible that — as he argues — one wing within conservatism should take control of it, gain momentum by discovery of 'enemies within', break with the consensus policies of its predecessors and steal the issue of 'freedom' from the very opponents it persecuted? At this point Sir John Neale's ghost is summoned, for a purpose different from the one which he originally espoused: why, we've seen it in our own day. □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Homeless in Thames Valley

Margaret Singh, Labour Chair, Housing Committee, Reading

We hear much about the homeless problem in London (*NS* 2 Oct.). Can I fill in the blanks from this affluent part of the Thames Valley? We were appalled in the early summer to hear on the grapevine that Westminster had contemplated exporting their homeless to us — no one would actually say it was a possibility 'on the record' so we wrote to Westminster and I'd like via your journal to tell a wider audience.

Reading itself currently has 300 families in bed and breakfast accommodation, many of those placed with landlords who we ourselves are actively chasing as part of a concerted campaign against the rogue landlord. We estimate there are between 1500 and 2000 properties in multiple occupation, most of those below standards that are acceptable. Some of them are so appalling that we have even issued Control orders and started CPO proceedings.

But there is no slack, no leeway, so where do we put the next family that presents? We are currently building new houses to rent, we're working with North Housing as part of their much praised new scheme, our void rate is extremely low, we've no hard-to-let estates; still we cannot cope and our waiting list and homelessness figures continue to rise, indeed spiral, out of control. A quick glance at the Housing White Paper indicates that my new build programme has had its Last Rites read. I've written to the local Tory MPs asking them what happens to the statutory responsibility for the homeless when our assets are stopped and they've not replied. This is the affluent South East in the 1980s. As Chair of the Housing Committee I see the future and frankly I'm terrified.

No vocation

George Cowley, Worcester

Perhaps at 50 I shouldn't be so sensitive, but Anne Rouse's poem 'Burst' (*NS* 25 Sept.) touched a very tender nerve. As an ex-mental-patient, I could almost say that there, encapsulated in 17 lines, was the story of my life. Perhaps the main drawback to having spent 16 years in a mental hospital was (and still is) the practical non-existence of available female partners — apart from the occasional fellow-patient. One is reduced to the position of 'worshipping from afar' — rather like being a monk without the vocation.

On the buses

Daniel Wilson, Edenbridge, Kent

I have no sympathy with Michael Woodgate's praise of the bus (*NS* 18 Sept.). Buses only work for those with huge patience and an ability to read the driver's nose. When electronic indication at bus stops of what departures may be reliably expected finally arrives, so will true usefulness for buses. Until then, the only possible urban transport is the tram. No conflict with a car will immobilise it and no fool despatcher or planner with a pen can change its route. Quite incidentally, as central Melbourne proves, it's a whole lot quieter and cleaner too.

June Beedham, Public Relations Manager, London Buses Ltd

OPO in inner London is being introduced with some caution. About 20 per cent of our routes are still operated with conductors. No route is converted to OPO until tested for suitability. Extra time is normally allowed for buses to complete their journeys to account for greater boarding times. However these are diminishing with the greater use of bus passes and travelcards — some 60 per cent of passengers now use these — and experimental electronic ticketing systems.

Disarmament — what's needed now

Jane Mayes, Chair, CND International Committee

'The cause of unilateralism halted' and 'the danger of disarmament to the disarmers' — titles to Sarah Benton's otherwise throughtful piece on CND — say rather more about the views of the Editor of the *New Statesman* than they do about CND (*NS* 2 Oct). What we are doing in CND is assessing unilateralism in the context of the INF agreement and of Soviet new thinking, and redefining it in terms of the new international situation.

A taste of success such as we have had with the INF agreement may well encourage members to relax. They are well aware, however, there are new developments such as the Eurobomb (taken a step further by last week's announcement of further talks between the UK and France) designed to undermine the gains of the INF agreement.

Gorbachev has turned the tide in favour of disarmament and created more rather than less space for 'unilateralism in one country' — a point made by Gorbachev's foreign policy advisor Anatoli Dobrynin last week when he said that Britain and France risked isolation if they did not join the superpowers in scrapping nuclear weapons.

It's not so much moral force which is needed in the CND and the anti-nuclear parties, including the Labour Party, but the clear identification of unilateralism as the sharpest of tools with which to countermand new nuclear policies, such as the Eurobomb, and to build on the openings created by Gorbachev.

Bruce Kent, Vice Chair, CND

I wonder if John Lloyd would help me. He writes, he says, editorials 'advocating multilateralism'. Who wouldn't. The ABM Non-Proliferation and Partial Test Ban treaties should be valued and honoured. Unilateral initiatives ought to have as their aim the stimulation of a process aimed at binding treaties.

But would John Lloyd please explain in detail how this applies to the British 'independent' nuclear deterrent. Dr Owen now makes clear that as long as the Soviets have nuclear weapons we will keep ours. Lord Kennet, SDP authority and once of CND, now says that we can consider getting rid of ours when the superpowers have reduced theirs by 70 per cent. That puzzles me. I suppose the remaining 30 per cent might still be used for nuclear blackmail if that is the real worry. But could we please know what John Lloyd has on offer. If the Soviets (and Americans?) agree to get rid of an equal number as ours is that a bargain he would support? Or what about three times as many? Or five times? After all they have plenty of spare.

Does he really mean, like Dr Owen, that we are going to be in the nuclear ring as long as anyone else is? If that is the case I do not know how we can keep anyone else out. Multilateralism in this connection sounds good. It's reasonable, prudent, respectable and entirely confusing. Would John Lloyd tell us on what terms he would agree to the multilateral treaty which would remove Polaris/Trident?

My views . . .

Sir Alfred Sherman, London SW1

Your article (*NS* 2 Oct.) has misrepresented me. First, I never used the term 'white' for English. This usage is racial and ignores the Englishness of England. By the same token, I do not use 'black' or 'coloured' for Afro-Caribbean, Bangladeshi, etc.

Second, I made it clear that to repatriate members of ethnic minorities would be neither moral nor expedient; constructive resettlement could be entertained only if the relevant governments and families were persuaded that it offered them a better future than life here.

Third, since I answered all questions you posed, I wonder whether it is fair to say that I am 'unable to make the connection' regarding a question you did not ask, namely the relevance of Jewish experience to Britain for Third-World minorities. As the Bible says, the Children of Israel are unlike all other peoples.

The demographic decline of the Jews in

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Britain has no parallel with the Third-World ethnic minorities in Britain and Western Europe for several reasons. The reservoir of Jewish immigration into Britain in Eastern Europe was wiped out by Hitler, and there is no visible replacement. Israel's cultural-religious influence on the Community cuts both ways, since while it helps to raise Jewish consciousness, it also tends to draw away to Israel the most committed, who in general also tend to have the larger families. European Jews are as affected by secularisation as the middle-class Christians among whom they live.

By contrast, Asian minorities are still deeply religious; their cultures of origin show no signs at all of secularisation, in fact there is fundamentalist resurgence. Furthermore, a majority of Commonwealth immigrants in this country are members of extended families, a majority of whom remain in situ and form reservoirs for further immigration and support for cultural continuity, the more so when the jet plane makes intercontinental travel commonplace.

So far, unlike British Jews, they have higher than European birthrates. Since many were brought here to fill the lower ranks of society, they will, other things being equal, continue to have high class-related birth rates even when acculturated to British society. So far, though sections of Asian immigrants have made their way in business and professions, in most cases because they came from comparable backgrounds in their own country, the large Asian and Afro-Caribbean proletariat brought in to man declining low-paid industries has not yet shown much in the way of social mobility.

So we must consider how to accommodate an unprecedented situation brought about without consideration. Experience of ethnic problems over the past two centuries, particularly when interwoven with religious differences, suggests that unless tackled with intellectual boldness Britain's self-inflicted ethnic problems could bring calamity.

The tragedy unfolding before our eyes in Fiji as a result of decisions taken a century ago without thought for the longer-term consequences should give us pause for thought. The consideration that a century hence people might say: 'My God! Sherman was right' is no consolation to me.

No obscure sideshow

Dr Shalom Goldman, Uxbridge, Middx
As a Jew I can only express my utter disgust at the actions of Sir Alfred Sherman in inviting the French National Front leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, to speak in Great Britain.

Anyone who calls the massacre of six million Jews a 'minor detail' is an anti-Semite, no different to Oswald Mosley who encouraged people to march through the Jewish areas of east London chanting 'Perish Judah'.

For me (and thousands of other Jews in Great Britain) the Holocaust was anything but a minor detail. My father and brother were whipped and tortured by the notorious Julius Streicher. My mother and I were both interned in Ravensbruck Concentration Camp where all Jewish prisoners were maltreated and humiliated by the evil Nazi wardress Irma Griese.

As a Jew himself and a former adviser to Mrs Thatcher, Sir Alfred Sherman should know better than to invite to Britain a person who thinks that the atrocities committed by the Nazis during the war were an obscure sideshow.

Glyn Ford, MEP
While I support Sir Alfred Sherman's right to free speech, it does not mean that I want to see his 'apologetics' in the *New Statesman*. Surely Sir Alfred's case for saving Jean-Marie Le Pen from himself would have better graced the *Daily Mail* rather than this magazine.

This England

Robert Macintyre, Argyll
This title was retained by Kingsley Martin because it suggested precisely the peculiarly English reaction to the world. Your retention of it (*NS* 11 September) because it is seen by you as 'a venerable tradition' would have been seen by Kingsley as a possible item for the column.

Nonsense of our voting system

Enid Lakeman, Electorial Reform Society, London SE7
Jeff Rooker attacks the method of electing one person by first-past-the post (Letters 18 September). No party puts up with having its leader elected by a minority. But we are still having to put up with having a *government* elected by a minority, and no improvement in our way of electing a single MP can do anything to prevent

To ensure that nearly every voter gets an MP whom she or he has personally chosen and helped to elect, it is essential to vote by preferences, not in single-member constituencies but in larger ones electing several MPs together by quota — preferably natural units like the city of Leeds or the county of Berkshire.

There will be no need for compulsory voting. In the elections to the European parliament, the turnout in Northern Ireland was twice that in Britain — because, thanks to PR/STV, they had a wide choice among a dozen candidates and near certainty that the choice they expressed would affect the result in the way they wished.

National stink

Dan Wilson, Edenbridge, Kent
I had waited for a long time to hear someone put their finger quite so accurately on the decay of *The Last Night Of The Proms* from send-up to nationalist rally as Diana Eden did (*NS* 25 Sept.). Product of the post-Great War antijingoism that survived until well after World War 2, I cringed recently to find an expatriate Czech woman crouched over her set watching it. She had cut short a visit to Prague specially not to miss it. 'What you don't realise is,' she explained, 'if this happened in Prague the police would come in and clear the hall. These people are *on the same side as their government*. That is to me real democracy.'

She's right. The British *are* backward, illiberal, xenophobic yahoos. In the words of many ex-colonial Third World politicians, 'democracy means our shambles and not your well-run machine'. Take the *NS* itself: here is no place to find illuminating in-depth treatment of the views of the contrary-minded in order to demonstrate their error: however well-intentioned, most of your political writing is purposeful misrepresentation in order to avoid difficult discussion. Intolerance does not have to be expressed on a national scale to stink.

Nepotism

Julian Flood, Lodge Farm Cottage, Coney Weston, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 3HS
I have been commissioned to write a book on nepotism in high places. Could I ask through your columns for any snippets or anecdotes on the subject, with a lighter touch if possible, of particularly crass or blatant examples? I am especially interested in the media (not newspapers or periodicals, heaven forfend!), politics with particular reference to the 'Caligula's horse' system, business and industry, and the upper reaches of the law. All replies will be treated in the strictest confidence.

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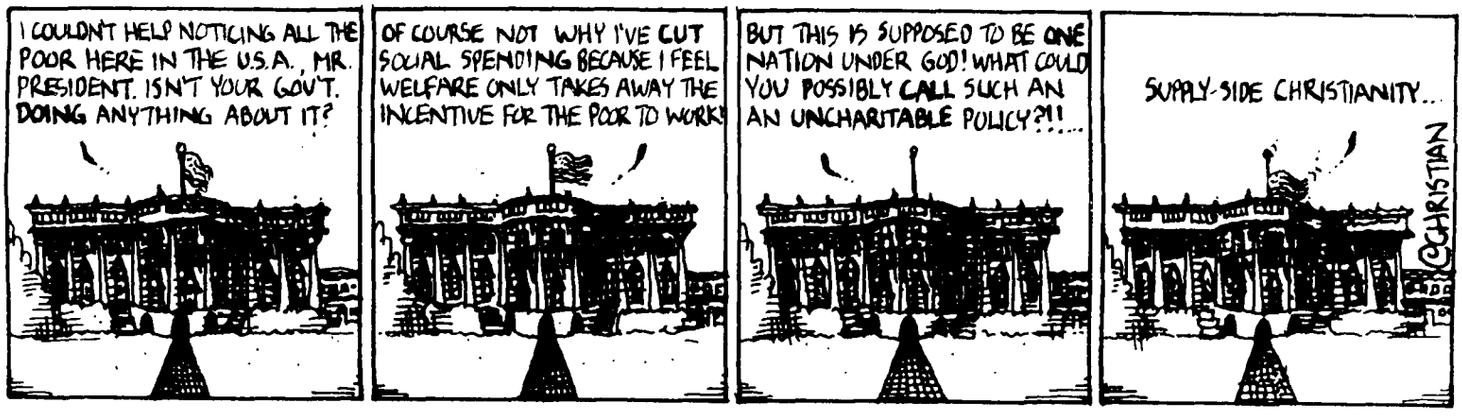
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NATIONAL THEATRE 01-928 2252 Olivier (open stage) **SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS, KING LEAR.** Lyttleton (proscenium stage) **THE WANDERING JEW, SCHOOL FOR WIVES (last perfs).** Cottesloe (small auditorium) **ENTERTAINING STRANGERS, TING TANG MINE, MEAN TEARS.** See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

BLOOMSBURY THEATRE 01-387 0629. **UK USSR STUDENT THEATRE EXCHANGE: The Latvian State University Theatre Group PANTOMIME** 2.00 p.m. **THE FIRERAISERS** 8.00 p.m., 16 Oct, (in Latvian). Tickets £4.00 (concs £2.50). 20-24 Oct **THE OFF OFF WEST END WEEK. THE VICIOUS BOYS in Vicious Roomers.** 21-24 Oct, 8 p.m. **GERRY SADOWITZ in Total Abuse,** 20 Oct, 10.30 p.m. **JENNY LECOAT with special guest RICHARD VANCH plus support from HATTIE HAYRIDGE,** 21-22 Oct, 10.30 p.m. **THE JOAN COLLINS FAN CLUB** (with **RUSSELL CHURNEY),** 23-24 Oct, 10.30 p.m. Ticket prices all shows, £3.50 (concs £2.50). Double Bill tickets £5.00 (concs £4.00).

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY 01-638 8891 **BARBICAN THEATRE:** Sat 17 Oct **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.** 19-20 Oct **THE BALCONY by Jean Genet.** 21-22 Oct **MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM** Fri 23 Oct **THE WINTER'S TALE. THE PIT:** 17 Oct **THE ART OF SUCCESS** by **Nick Dear.** 19-20 Oct **DEATHWATCH, THE MAIDS** by **Jean Genet.** 21-22 Oct **THE ART OF SUCCESS** by **Nick Dear.** Fri 23 Oct **DEATHWATCH, THE MAIDS** by **Jean Genet. MERMAID** 01-236 5568/741 9999 (inc Sundays) Sat 17 Oct **THE GREAT WHITE HOPE** by **Howard Sackler.** 19-20 Oct **THEY SHOOT HORSES DON'T THEY by Ray Ermin and Horace McCoy (final perfs).** Fri 23 Oct **SARCOPHAGUS** by **Vladimir Gubaryev.**

LECTURE

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

The 1987 Creighton Lecture entitled: "1787: The Collapse of the Patriot Movement and the Problem of Dutch Decline" will be given by Professor Dr E. H. Kossman (Professor Emeritus of Modern History, University of Groningen and formerly Professor of Dutch History, University College London) at 5.30 p.m. on Monday, 2 November 1987, at the University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU.

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AGENDA

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Deadline: 2pm Mondays

MON 19 OCT

WHO KILLED SAMORA MACHEL? First anniversary of the death of Samora Machel and 35 others in Muzini, South Africa. Commemorative vigil outside the South African Embassy. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

TUES 20 OCT

PROGRESSIVE LEAGUE, 7.30 p.m. at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Talk by James Hemming on "Sex and Personal Development". Charge 75p (including refreshments), UB40 cards free. The Progressive League caters for mind, body and intellectual stimulus. Ring 01-586 2274 for information.

WED 21 OCT

JOHN SMITH MP on the "The Economic Road to Recovery". 7.30 p.m., House of Commons Committee Room 19. All welcome. Central London Fabian Society.

FORTHCOMING

CONFERENCE ON 'NEO-FASCISM IN EUROPE'. Speakers on Italy, France, Spain, Britain and Germany. 6-7 November 1987. Details from: Italian Studies, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YN. Tel (0524) 65201 ext 4270/4484.

WED 28 OCT

Seminar: "ASPECTS OF CHANGING TECHNOLOGY"

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Applications in writing to **Joanne Hurst, Production Manager, New Statesman, Foundation House, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ. Closing date for applications: 23 October.**

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APPOINTMENTS

OV SELECTION have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers. Phone Odette Veazey. OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345. N49.34

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BACKCHAT

OUT TO LUNCH

Young love

Andrew Lumsden

I HAVEN'T HEARD that anyone is suggesting the creation of a Museum of Aolescence, next step up from museums of childhood. A pilot exhibition might be attempted at the BM's Museum of Mankind (tut-tut) but I do believe, National Trust permitting, that I've found the perfect permanent home: Chirk Castle in Clwyd.

I've just been on a narrow-boat holiday, chugging along the canals which thread the Welsh border from Llangollen to I don't know where. We were four (*'Imagine four queens in a boat/More often aground than afloat . . .*): Jonathan, director of Gay's the Word, Geoff, sometime out gay teacher in the state system (you should see the testimonial the kids gave him), Geoff's lover, Peter, and me.

I had a learned dispute with Peter, which some more learned reader might be able to resolve. He says that when he was applying to go to Essex University in 1970 the courses included one on Gay Liberation Front, whereas I thought that that movement, born in New York the night Judy Garland was buried, in June 1969, stayed unreflected in Britain until the GLF meetings at LSE which started in October 1970.

So it is that even recent events haze — if something that happened when today's school-leavers had yet to be conceived can be called recent. Anyway, this museum idea: our lazily meandering route took us past the finger-post to Chirk (of which 'pleasant seat' more in a moment) and of course to Llangollen, where I bought for re-reading Elizabeth Mavor's celebrated 1971 book on 'The Ladies' thereof and walked uphill to see their cottage.

'Rose at six, enchanting morning. My beloved and I went the home circuit — the morning so heavenly, could not leave the shrubbery till nine . . . dinner, roast breast of mutton, boiled veal, bacon and greens, toasted cheese . . .' That's 1788, from the journal of Lady Eleanor Butler, elder of the two 'Ladies of Llangollen' who fled their grand Irish relatives in 1778, sought a quiet retirement in Wales and promptly became famous throughout Europe for their Rousseau-ish idyll and could hardly fend off their fashionable visitors. Her beloved is Sarah Ponsonby.

The 1788 journal goes on: 'Think the Thatcher horrible . . .' I haven't faked that capital letter. A slightly ungrateful remark, for, as one of my travelling companions, Jonathan, observes, it was only the year before (1787) that the two Ladies became the first lesbian enterprise to apply for a grant and be given it — £100 a year — by the Tories, Pitt administration.

'Owen, Mr Myddelton's bailiff, came to demand a Christmas box . . .' (1791). Richard Myddelton was neighbouring gentry, owner of Chirk a few miles away. We moored and locked up the barge and walked through the gigantic park that surrounds the castle. In the Saloon, a glass-topped table contains an invitation to breakfast, the handwriting tiny, which Sarah Ponsonby sent the Myddelton family, promising they may arrive as early or late as they please.

Begun in 1295, Chirk is a compact, manageable castle as such things go: five round turrets and room-filled curtain walls surrounding one grass-plot courtyard. The views from its hilltop windows are unbelievable, stretching for ever and ever. The Myddeltons, there since 1595, still keep apartments though the property has been the nation's since 1978.

My first thought was that spare rooms ought to be done over as a permanent Hall-Carpenter (which is to say lesbian/gay) loan exhibition of archive material and memorabilia telling the tale of homosexuality in this country. For the Chirk site was given by Edward I, in 1282, to *Mortimer* . . . ring a bell? That same 'elder Mortimer', Roger Mortimer of Chirk, for whom Marlowe in *Edward II* wrote the speech defending the love of Edward I's son for Piers Gaveston. The same Mortimer whose nephew, also Roger, had Edward II murdered in 1327 (one version of the story goes) in not-so-far-off Berkeley Castle.

Two so redolent locations, then, so near each other, so linked in the past, the Ladies' cottage and the Mortimers' fortress, both in such beautiful country. Then I considered: Sarah was 13 when Eleanor first fell for her in 1768, Gaveston about 15 when the prince 'at once loved him'. Why not, and perhaps more practicably, a general Museum of Adolescence? Which is as much, for most of history, as to say a Museum of Love. □

'Alright son, come quietly . . . we're with the Trivial Crimes Squad . . .'

FIRST PERSON

Fault on the line

Christian Wolmar

ONE CANNOT FAULT privatised British Telecom for enterprise. There I was in the third day without a phone, pressing my point about the indispensability of the service to a freelance journalist, when the genial Mr Sharma, the customer services manager, came up with a suggestion that should earn him a bonus from his directors.

'If you and your girlfriend are both professional people who need the telephone,' he said without pause or hesitation, 'perhaps you should consider obtaining a second line?'

I am not often left speechless but this triggered off such a conflicting wave of emotions that, for several seconds, I was unable to reply. Finally I took a deep breath and replied, curtly and courteously, that perhaps it was not the best time to try to sell me more of their products and, in any case, with two lines there would be twice the opportunity of one of them being out of order.

I learnt a lot about British Telecom, apart from its thrusting entrepreneurial ethic, during the time I was cut off and made several mistakes which *New Statesman* readers would do well to learn from.

It began when I picked up the phone on Sunday and was immediately connected to my next-door neighbour, who happens to have a telephone number just one digit different from mine. He was unable to make calls. Mine was its usual crackling self, but I told him that I would report his fault. This was my first error.

Surprisingly, although it was the sabbath, the engineers took down all the details. On Monday the phone crackled a bit more than usual and I got more crossed lines. On Tuesday morning the phone went dead.

I reported this and the engineers said 'Yes, it's on our computer and there's a fault in the exchange. Should be fixed quite soon.' The second error is to believe anything that any of them says to you.

What you need to know is that there is a very distinct hierarchy of personnel dealing with complaints. The people higher up it deal with the top engineers, so they are more likely to get your work done. But I didn't know that on the Wednesday when I was speaking to a Mrs

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Thompson, who was merely the first recipient of customers' stick.

I explained to her that BT had cut me off after I had reported a fault. 'What makes you think you are cut off?' she asked. 'The phone is completely dead.' 'Ah, that doesn't mean you are cut off, it merely indicates that there is a fault on the line.' The argument seemed to be getting metaphysical and I didn't pursue it.

Instead I went to her boss, Mr Sharma. 'While my line is not working, could you at least make it sound as if it's not working? Then my would-be employers will realise that the phone is out of order.' He readily agreed to 'busy out' the line, but this was to cost me another two days without a telephone: the engineers had, until then, thought that it was a fault in the exchange, but when the line was switched off those working on the exchange equipment were not informed and then assumed that the fault was outside.

Of course, I was sweetly unaware of this and had been promised that, as my case was being treated as an emergency — a lie, as it turned out — the phone would 'probably' be reconnected on Wednesday evening or Thursday morning. By Thursday afternoon I had discovered a new recipient of my stream of friendly abuse: the 'High Level Complaints Officer' (actually, the local manager by another name). This lofty person, Mr Owen, told me that it had been a bad mistake to 'busy out' the line. 'You see, it makes it more difficult for the engineers to check the line. It's much better to leave it ringing.'

'Why didn't they tell me that at the time?'

'Well, if you asked them to turn it off, they followed your instructions. We always try to do what the customer wants.'

Mr Owen went on to say that, if I was dissatisfied with his service, I should complain to the chairman's office where there is a special complaints department. The number is 01-356 5000, but it's often engaged and there's not much they can do centrally, anyway, he said.

That is one of their common tricks. At each level, they give you a different number to ring and these are permanently engaged. To get round it, you should go through the local office's main switchboard, preferably using the Freephone, and hold on till the cows come home, making sure they 'camp' you on the line so that you are switched automatically through when the previous caller hangs up. The minus point is that you seem to be automatically cut off after six minutes, and you have to ring again.

On Saturday, at 8.30 am, the phone rang. 'I'm delighted you answered,' said the engineer given the task of telling me the phone was working. This proves that they will work at the weekend if you complain enough at them. In fact, according to Mr Owen, I had been well treated: 'Some people are without a phone for months. You were lucky to escape with just a week.' Phone books used to say that the fault would normally be repaired by the end of the following working day after it was reported. It's hardly surprising that this promise does not appear in the new London A-D. □

WINE

Reserva judgment

Stephen Brook

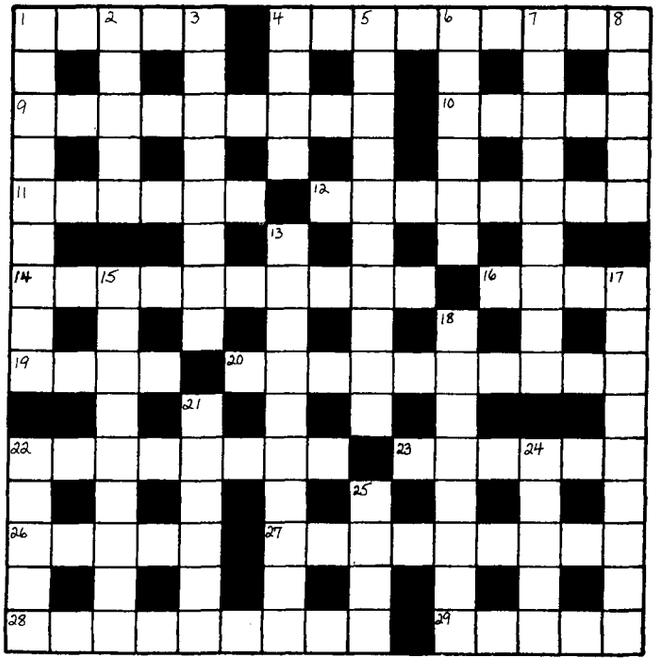
LAST MONTH I devoted hundreds of words to explaining how a German wine label is constructed. No need to repeat the exercise for Portuguese labels, which, apart from the name of the wine, its producer and the vintage, often contain no information at all. This is because most Portuguese wines are blends, concocted by large companies and vast cooperatives. Nothing wrong with blends, of course, but it makes it difficult to compare like with like when blind-tasting 48 wines.

Portugal has long been the home of sturdy, almost meaty red wines, big on flavour, low on elegance. But a handful of winemakers have been attempting in recent years to produce wines that are more characterful, with the richness of fruit British consumers have come to expect from a bottle of red. In addition, regions such as Bairrada and Douro (where port is made), which used to appear infrequently on our wine lists, are now some of our supermarket staples. I've been taking a look at these two regions and, also, at some of the blends, both traditional and innovative in style.

Some labels carry the words *Reserva* or *Garrafeira*. Although it implies a superior quality and longer wood-ageing, the term *Reserva* is close

Weekend Crossword 1574

PRIZES: £3 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1574, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 27 October.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

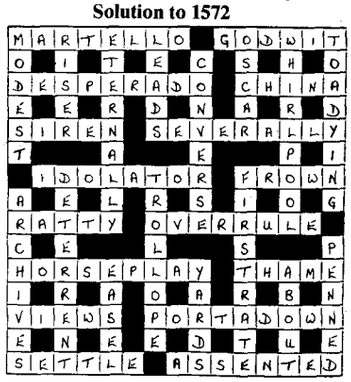
1. Ran away headless and took big strides (5)
4. Greeks who have seen a ship wrecked (9)
9. Was unwell after a drink as a duck may be (9)
10. Gentle novice enters a group (5)
11. It may be British but the politician enters a foreign country (6)
12. A man embraces many in immoral behaviour (8)
14. Portray a game as a means of communication between two sides (10)
16. Where a recluse does without it (4)
19. Capital for lover without a ring (4)
20. Give old fellow weapons for great battle (10)
22. Reward for wide turn in the middle (8)
23. Food for a blockhead (6)
26. Take part in a race on even terms (5)
27. Have canal redesigned so that it comes down from the mountain (9)
28. Philosophers hold an examination in the causes of obscurity (9)
29. Rose holds an organ in place of romance (5)

DOWN

1. Handicapped person who has real pride (9)
2. Youngster included in a photograph (5)
3. Speech to help being returned by the people (8)
4. A girl whether or not she follows an Arab (4)
5. Shrub put in a row in unusually shady surroundings (10)
6. Stage alchemist (6)
7. Hater paid unusually for cause of hatred (9)
8. Unfortunately cunning about publicity (5)
13. Material in which to lie with boy and girl (10)
15. Where to put a cross inside a church (9)
17. Enact mime presented as something to enjoy at Christmas (9)
18. One patch coverted for use as a memorial (8)
21. Birkenhead country (6)
22. Submerge when water starts coming over part of boat (5)
24. Sayings of a ruler who has lost a mountain (5)
25. Drink like a fish (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1572



Prizewinners to 1572

I. Gilbert (Derby)
Mrs N. Yates (Cawsand, Cornwall)
D. A. Deason (London E18)

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to meaningless. Not so *Garrafeira*, which means that the wine has been aged in bottle for at least a year before release. Such treatment is reserved for wines of exceptional quality to ensure that the wine, while capable of further ageing, is ready to drink on release. These tend to be the most old-fashioned of Portuguese reds, by which I mean that the wine, like many Riojas and Barolos, spends many years in cask before being bottled. Wood-ageing gives a wine structure and finesse — but only if the fruit is sufficiently rich to support such treatment. Excessive wood-ageing can result in indistinguishable wines that are tannic, lean and astringent.

Three *Garrafeiras* stood out: 1974 Caves Velhas (Oddbins, £3.69), 1975 Casaleiro (Wizard, £3.89) and 1980 Casal do Castelao (about £4). Two wines from one of the best Portuguese firms, Fonseca, proved disappointing: the unfortunately named 1980 DT (H. Allen Smith, £5.45) would have been better if bottled sooner and the 1981 TE (Waitrose, £4.95), while plump and thoroughly enjoyable, is distinctly inferior to the now unavailable 1980 TE. Vintages in Portugal are important, as was confirmed by most 1980 wines. 1983 and 1985 will also be excellent.

As for the newly fashionable Bairrada wines, I cannot understand what the fuss is all about. Among them I found few that were repellent, but even fewer that were outstanding. Many, even from producers such as Fonseca (Majestic, £3.35) and Frei Joao (about £3.45), simply lacked fruit. They nearly all have an attractive nose, but are disappointing in the mouth. Of the two vintages from Joao Pato that I tasted, the 1980 was surprisingly rough, but I thoroughly enjoyed the rich, sweet, assertive style of the 1984. The son Luis makes even better wine under his own name; the 1980 and 1985 are splendid. Two 1983 wines were excellent — from Vilharinho do Bairro and Garcia Pulido — and I liked the straightforward but perky 1980 Sao Domingos, but the supermarket Bairradas were crude (if keenly priced, at under £2.50) and one cooperative wine, the 1983 from Cantanhede, both smelt sweaty and contained what looked like part of the foreman's socks.

The Douro wines were also not up to expectations. Numerous examples from the Mesao Frio cooperative were woody and tart, though a 1976 had aged gracefully to resemble old Burgundy, especially on the nose. Which goes to show that, if you keep anything long enough, there's a fighting chance that it will improve. Three 1982 single-estate Douro wines were in complete contrast. The Quinta da Cotto and the Quinta da Pacheca (both £3.50-£4.50) have made rich, gutsy wines with a nose redolent of port and chocolate; they have just the concentration and vigour most of the old-fashioned wines lack. Both will be even better in three years' time. The 1985 Grande Escolha is a huge, porty wine, rich but expensive at about £8.

Two companies, Fonseca and Pires, have established a niche for themselves on the British market by making wines that are sound, sometimes complex, and cheap. Fonseca produces excellent blends under the brand names of Camarate, Pasmados and Periquita. Sturdy, reliable wines, they do vary considerably from vintage to vintage. The 1980 Camarate (Majestic, £3.69) is rich and ripe, which can hardly be said for the skeletal, undernourished 1981. The 1982 Periquita is a spicy aromatic wine of some charm and delightfully cheap (Waitrose, £2.99). The best of the Fonseca wines is the 1980 Tinto Velho Reguengos de Monsaraz (Tesco, £3.59), with similar qualities to a top Southern Rhone. Marvellous wine, and now one of the house wines at Chateau Brook. From Pires comes the much praised Quinta de Bacalhoa, made from Bordeaux grape varieties, but the 1984 (Sainsbury, £3.95) isn't a patch on earlier vintages. Far better value is the spicy 1982 Tinto da Anfora, a touch vulgar perhaps, but still excellent (Waitrose, £2.95). There was a surprise: the 1980 Romeira (Oddbins, £2.79), which proved far better than the rather sickly 1976 *Garrafeira* from the same producer (Gough, Dominic, £3.59): a triumph of vintage over pretension.

Nearly all the wines improved when retasted after a few hours or even the next day. Do let them breathe. Only the top wines have the finesse that is the mark of great wine. Too many were merely competent: quaffing wines to accompany strongly flavoured food, but hardly distinguished. Still, these wines, even the top ones, are clearly underpriced, so take advantage of them. □

Weekend competition

No 2997 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Many readers begin by glancing at the end of a novel. Wanted, last paragraphs (but not from *real* novels, please) that would ensure that such readers didn't bother to go to the beginning. Max. 120 words by 28 October.

No 2994 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Songs to inspire those lonely people north of the Border — the Scottish Tories.

Report **By Rosie Hughes**

My lambkins, when we set this Comp we managed to spell Loch Lomond wrong. As Bob Ballantyne so sharply says, why didn't we ask dear Scottish Mr Lloyd? Apologies for our southern stupidity — doubly so as your entries were truly stupendous. At the next Election, when Maggie's clan sweeps gloriously up through the Highlands, you'll be able to give yourselves a pat on the back for having been the source of its inspiration. Special Mentions to Tim Hopkins, June F. Langfield, Phillip A. Nicholson Frank McDonald, Margaret Rogers, John Sweetman, M.E.Ault, Will Bellenger, Noel Petty, Alison Prince and Alexander Brodie Coupar Angus. Ten pounds a head to the rousing songsters below.

Wi' Tory hypers an' a' an' a'
In Scotland floggin' the Poll Tax Law,
We'll up an' gie them a blaw a blaw
O' rightwing jargon an' jaw an' jaw.

O it's o'er the border awa' awa'
Where Tory power is a' is a'
We'll up an' run back to Westminster ha!
Wi' its gets an' hassles an a' an a'.

Wi' Tory hypers an a' an' a'
We'll con the Scots into Thatcher's maw
But the awkward buggers might go to war
For independence an' a' an' a'.

GERRY HAMILL

I belong to Glasgow, dear old Glasgow town.
There'd be nothing the matter with Glasgow if it's
politics were sound.
I'm only a working-class Tory voter, as anyone here
can see,
But when enterprise culture has cleaned up around
Glasgow, then it'll belong to me.

I support the Rangers, Protestant and blue.
I'm right behind Graham Souness and against the
Fenian crew.
I'm only a Thatcherite man-in-the-street, as anyone
here can tell,
But I'll curse and I'll fight and I'll throw back the
heavy till we've given the lefties hell.

I'm not very sober. I'm not very bright.
I'm not one of your Islington poofs that got us in the
the shite.
I've only a lumpen consciousness, as everyone here
must know,
But I'll smile as I'm nutting a solid brick wall as
long as Maggie is running the show!

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

The Blue Poll of Scotland

Oh where and oh where is your Highland voter gone?
He has gone to find a job for in Scotland there are
none,
And it's deep in my heart that I wish he'd buy his
home!

Oh where and oh where did your Highland voter
dwell?
We sent him a Blue leaflet at the Sign of the Blue Bell,
For our much-loved poll-tax officer would like to
know as well.

Oh how, tell me how, is the Highland voter clad?
With seven kilts and sporrans and two dozen rolls
of plaid,
And he knows in his heart that he's better than his
Dad!

Suppose, oh suppose that your Highland voter die!
His widow pays his poll-tax ere she lay her down
and cry,
But it's oh! in my heart I begin to wonder why.

GAVIN J.S. ROSS

In yon Bonny Bank yet may stash all your loot
When we've privatised Loch Lomond;
We'll tak it all from ye and sell it back again,
Through the Bonny Bonny Banks of Loch Lomond.
Och ye'll tak a wee Share and we'll tak a huge share
And ye'll Stag yours in the morning,
But we'll hang onto oors for ever and anon
In the Mony Mony Banks of Loch Lomond.

GERARD BENSON

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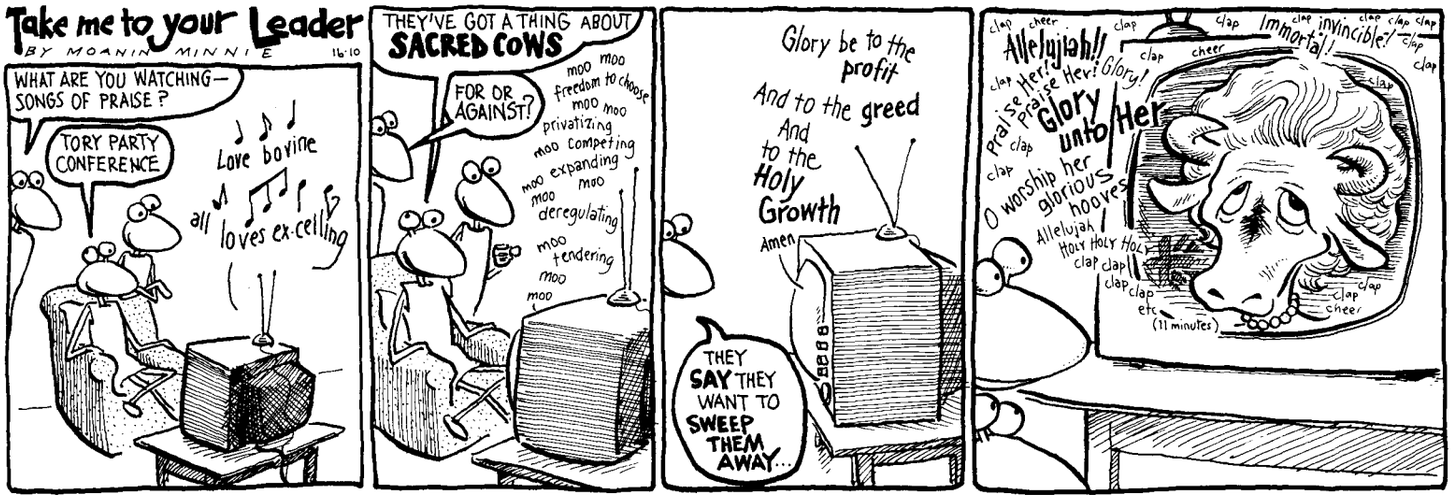


Chess

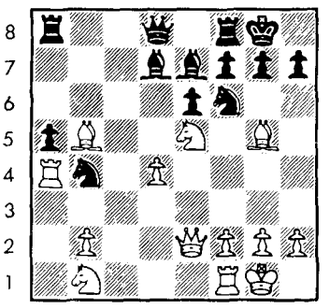
AFTER JOHN Nunn's unsuccessful trip to Budapest (he lost the first two games of his play-off with Portisch), the full line-up for the first round candidates' matches in St John, Canada next January is: Short v Sax (Hungary), Speelman v Seirawan (USA), Portisch (Hungary) v Vaganyan (USSR), Sokolov (USSR) v Spraggett (Canada), Yusupov (USSR) v Ehlvest (USSR), Timman (Netherlands) v Salov (USSR), and Korchnoi (Switzerland) v Hjartarson (Iceland).

The individual matches are intriguingly unpredictable. Short will be generally favoured to win through against Sax, whereas Speelman is paired against someone who has been talked about as a potential world champion. But any expectations of this sort might well be upset. Sax's sharp and dynamic style means that he is always going to be a dangerous practical player. Yasser Seirawan is more of a positional heavyweight, but there is a weakness in his game, a tendency to passivity, which Jon Speelman may be able to exploit.

As usual, whether Speelman can take the initiative will depend to a large extent on pre-match preparation. In this instance that will mean a lot of work on the Queen's Gambit Accepted — a regular part of Seirawan's repertoire, and something Speelman has been known to play too. One of Seirawan's games with the QGA provides food for thought on the relative strength of a Queen as against Rook and Bishop. Why should the Queen be stronger than the two officers whose powers she combines? Superior mobility is the answer: she can go where a Bishop treads and carry on like a Rook when she gets there. But if there is a static weakness in the Queen's camp, on the Bishop's colour, she may be outgunned:

Portisch-Seirawan, Dubai Olympiad. QGA.
1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. Nf3 c5 4. e3 Nf6 5. Bxc4 e6 6. 0-0 a6 7. Qe2 b5 8. Bd3 cxd4 9. exd4 Nc6 10. a4 bxa4 11. Rxa4 Nb4 12. Bc4 Be7 13. Bg5 a5 14. Bb5+ Bd7 15. Ne5 0-0 *See diagram.* Opening notes so far: Seirawan's 3 . . . c5 is an unusual move-order. What can we read into it? Perhaps that he is worried about the line 3 . . . Nf6 4. Nc3. A safer alternative to 9 . . . Nc6 was 9 . . . Be7, since as played Black was forced into 13 . . . a5, so as to avoid having his K-side pawns split by Bxf6. Still, has it worked out so badly? 16. Bxf6 is met by 16 . . . Bxb5 and the White Ra4 does not seem very mobile. In fact this Rook is about to start a combination that wins Black's Queen. Later, however, Portisch thought he should have avoided the transaction and continued more patiently with 15. Nc3. **16. Rxb4!? axb4 17. Bxd7 Nxd7 18. Nc6 Bxg5 19. Nxd8 Rfxd8** So White has won Q for R + B. But Black has no weaknesses and an unbreakable blockage on d5. He also has just the sort of game that Seirawan relishes — manoeuvring play with a static structure. **20. Qb5 Be7 21. Nd2 Nf6 22. Nf3 Rdb8 23. Qe2 Rc8 24. Ne5 Nd5 25. Re1** Now Black must be on his guard against 26. Nxf7. But it is just one trick — White cannot generate any other threats. **Rf8 26. Nc6 Rfc8 27. Ne5 Rf8 28. g3** Portisch still has ambitions. **Bf6 29. Nc6 Ra2 30. Rb1 Rfa8** Seirawan avoids the trap 30 . . . Nc3? 31. Qc4!. **31. Qb5 g6 32. Kg2 Kg7 33. Qb7 Ra1 34. Rxa1 Rxa1 35. Qb5?** Why doesn't Portisch take the pawn? Well, after 35. Nxb4 Nxb4 36. Qxb4 Rd1 Black cannot be prevented from playing . . . Bxd4, . . . e5 and . . . Rb1. But White can't secure anything better than this anyway. The feeling that you ought to win on the merits of previous play is often a guide to self-destruction. **Rb1 36. Qe2 Rc1 37. Na5 h5 38. Nb3 Rc7 39. Qe4 Ne7 40. Nd2 Rd7 41. Nf3 Rd5 42. Qc2 Nf5** This is the crunch! With 3 attackers and only 2 possible defenders d4 must fall. **43. Qc4 Nxd4 44. Qxb4 Nxf3 45. Kxf3 Rd4 46. Qb5 Rd2** Probably White can still hold the game with 47. Ke3 Rxb2 48. Qc4. But instead he preserved the wrong pawn and after **47. b4? Bd4 48. Qd7 Rxf2+ 49. Ke4 e5** Seirawan eventually prevailed, though it took 50 more moves for Black to win.

Last week's position [6k1/7r/p1n1p1pq/1pp1p3/4PrPb/PP1P1P2/1B2Q1K1/1BR4R] Gunsberg-Chigorin, 2nd match game 1890: **1 . . . Rxf3! 2. Qxf3** On 2. Rxh4 both 2 . . . Rg3+ and 2 . . . Qxh4 win. **Qd2+ 3. Kg1 Bf2+! 4. Kf1** Or 4. Qxf2 Rxh1+ 5. Kg2 Rh2+ etc. **Nd4! 5. Bxd4 Qxc1+ 6. Ke2 Rxh1** All over now. **7. Bf2 Qxb1 8. g5 Qf1+ 0-1.** Just one of the many combinative finishes to be found in *Mikhail Chigorin: Selected Games* (Batsford).



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This England

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☐ Bad language is off the menu at The Old Moat, Kidwelly, where ex-RAF officer Norman Aubrey has made a stand against the use of four-letter words. 'I have seen more civilised behaviour in Borneo than I have seen here. I get people from all over the world and their behaviour is superb — even among ordinary working-class families.' — *Western Mail* (Mrs Megan Rees)

☐ Those who covet a gold watch at the end of their careers will sympathise with a chap in Devon who retired recently. He was presented by his employers with a large box containing stationery, pens, pencils and paper clips. The note inside explained: 'We have long known that you have been nicking such things for years, so we hope this lot will keep you going in your retirement.' — *Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

☐ Nottingham's Tory-controlled city council, which announced yesterday that despite having 9,000 on its housing list it will not be building any more council homes, offered prizes to the first 200 tenants to buy their council properties from the remaining 45,000. First prize is a day with the Lord Mayor and runners-up will be given a party in the city's headquarters. — *Guardian* (W. Pugh)

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